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ABSTRACT

The Law School Admission Council (LSAC) Skills Analysis Survey identifies the skills that are important for success in law school. This information provides validity evidence for the current Law School Admission Test (LSAT) and guides the development of new test items and test specifications. The key question of the survey is "what academic tasks are fundamental to success in law school courses?" The survey asked law school faculty and students to rate the importance of 57 law school tasks in 14 skill-related categories as "highly," "moderately," or "somewhat" important or not important/not applicable for traditional first-year courses or upper division courses. There were 3,525 respondents from 41 law schools, of whom 457 were faculty members. Results show that students and faculty generally judged the most important tasks in most of the law school courses to involve Reading, Analyzing Cases or Legal Problems, Reasoning, Constructing Arguments, Problem Solving, Time Management, Listening, and Writing. Faculty judged Normative Thinking Tasks to have a similar degree of importance, but students ranked them somewhat lower. Reasoning tasks were not judged as important for success in most law school courses, although they were judged to be important for some courses. An appendix contains the survey. (Contains 15 figures and 3 references.) (SLD)

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LSAC RESEARCH REPORT SERIES

Final Report: LSAC Skills Analysis Law School Task Survey

Stephen W. Luebke
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A Publication of the Law School Admission Council

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Finally, we are deeply indebted to the faculty and staff members at the participating law schools who made this study possible by performing the unsung, but absolutely essential, task of distributing and collecting the surveys.

Executive Summary

The Law School Admission Council (LSAC) Skills Analysis Survey is a major component of the LSAC Skills Analysis Study, which in turn is an integral part of the Computerized LSAT Research Agenda. The goal of this survey is to identify the skills that are important for success in law school and the relationships among those skills. This information provides validity evidence for the current Law School Admission Test (LSAT) and will guide the development of new item types, item formats, and test specifications for future versions of the LSAT, including possible computerized versions.

The key question the survey sets out to answer is "what academic tasks are fundamental to success in law school courses." The survey also asks a set of related questions about whether the ratings of the importance of tasks to success in courses varies importantly between subgroups of the respondents, and among courses, law school years, and teaching methods. If certain tasks can be identified that are fundamental to all or most law school courses, the skills involved in those tasks can be inferred to be fundamental to success in law school.

The survey instrument asked law school faculty and students to rate the importance of 57 law school tasks in 14 skill-related categories as "highly important" (given the value 4), "moderately important" (3), "somewhat important" (2), or "not important/not applicable" (1) for one of seven traditional first-year courses or one of six upper-division courses. There were 3,525 respondents from 41 law schools, of which 3,048 identified themselves as law students and 457 as faculty members. The samples of respondents and schools are large and are similar, in terms of geographic, gender and ethnic proportions, to the total populations of law students, faculty, and schools.

For nearly all groups of respondents and for most of the courses surveyed, the categories of tasks fell into four tiers of importance, based on the mean ratings of the tasks and the percentage of respondents rating the tasks highly or moderately important.

Tier I (mean ratings 3.4 to 4.0)	Analyzing Cases or Legal Problems
Tier II (mean ratings 3.0 to 3.3)	Problem Solving Reasoning Writing Reading Listening Constructing Arguments Managing Time
Tier III (mean ratings 2.5 to 2.9)	Communicating Orally Organizing and Synthesizing Normative Thinking
Tier IV (mean ratings 1 to 2.4)	Conducting Research Working as Part of a Group or Interpersonally Quantitative Reasoning

The survey also asked respondents about how exhaustive the list of 57 tasks was. Over 80% of the respondents indicated that the list either included essentially all of the tasks involved in the course, or included most of them. In general, faculty members considered the list to be more exhaustive than students did.

These results indicate that students and faculty generally judged the most important tasks in most of the law school courses surveyed to involve Reading, Analyzing Cases or Legal Problems, Reasoning, Constructing Arguments, Problem Solving, Time Management, Listening, and Writing. Faculty also judged Normative Thinking tasks to have a similar degree of importance, while students rank them somewhat lower in importance. Organizing and Synthesizing and Communicating Orally tasks were judged less important for law school courses than those above, but were still judged to be of some importance. Conducting Research, Working as Part of a Group or Interpersonally, and Quantitative Reasoning tasks were not judged by the survey respondents as important for success in most law school courses, although they were judged to have importance in some courses.

Introduction

The goal of the Law School Admission Council (LSAC) Skills Analysis Study is to identify skills important for success in law school and the relationships among those skills. The LSAC Skills Analysis Survey is a main component of that study. Its aim is to collect and analyze the judgments of a sample of law school students and faculty about what tasks are important in selected law school courses. This information will guide the development of potential new item types, item formats, and test specifications for the Law School Admission Test (LSAT), as well as provide validation evidence for the current paper-and-pencil LSAT.

The basic testing question that lies behind the study is "what academic skills should be assessed to determine a student's potential for success in law school." In other words, we are asking, "What skills are fundamental to success in law school?" However, answering this question directly would require law school faculty and students to make theoretical judgments about the relationship of skills to the academic work they have observed in law school. To avoid confounding the survey results with such theoretical judgments, the skills analysis survey instead asked about academic tasks, the identification of which should be more clearly a matter of empirical observation. Legal educators and test specialists can apply their expert judgments in a consistent way to the responses about academic tasks to infer what academic skills are involved in those tasks.

To begin to answer this question the investigators collected judgments about what tasks and skills are important for success in law school from (1) reports from the Association of American Law Schools (AALS) and the American Bar Association (ABA), (2) a telephone survey of selected law school faculty members, (3) focus groups of students and faculty at three law schools, and (4) a report by an LSAC staff law school graduate. This preliminary information was used to construct a comprehensive list of law school tasks that included all those mentioned by these sources. This list was refined and condensed to provide the basis for a practical-length survey, on which law school students and faculty were asked to rate each task as "highly important," "moderately important," "somewhat important," or "not important/not applicable" for success in a particular law school course. Thus, the basic question asked by the survey is "How important is each of these tasks to success in this particular law school course?" These responses provide an indication of what tasks are considered important by law school faculty and students in one of a selected group of law school courses—both first-year and upper-level.

In addition to the basic question of how important certain academic tasks are to success in law school courses, a group of related questions were identified. Discussions with law school students and faculty revealed that they observed different methods of teaching in law school courses and that they thought this made a difference in how success in these courses was achieved. This led to the question: Does the importance of academic tasks to success in a law school course differ according to the methodology used to teach the course?

Focus groups with law school faculty and students also revealed differences in judgments about the importance of certain tasks. This led to the question: Do law school students and faculty differ in their judgments of the importance of tasks to success in law school courses?

In the light of current educational literature about the different ways students and faculty of different genders and ethnicities experience law school, the following questions were also asked: Do male and female law school students and faculty differ in their judgments of the importance of tasks to success in law school courses? Is there a difference in judgments about what academic tasks are important for success in law school courses between respondents of different race and ethnicity? Is there a difference in judgments about what academic tasks are important for success in law school courses between respondents whose primary language is English and those whose primary language is other than English?

Traditional first-year law school courses are taught in very similar ways across courses, professors, and schools. In contrast, some upper-level law school courses are taught quite differently from traditional first-year courses and quite differently from each other. This led to the question: Are there differences between courses in what tasks are important for success and, specifically, are there differences between the tasks important for success in traditional first-year courses and those important for success in upper-level courses that differ from first-year courses in subject matter and teaching methods?

Law students come from a wide variety of undergraduate backgrounds, as reflected in their undergraduate majors. As a result the question was posed: Is there a difference in judgments about what academic tasks are important for success in law school courses between students with different undergraduate specializations?

Finally, respondents were asked to judge the extent to which the list of tasks in the survey includes all the tasks necessary for success in a particular law school course. If they thought there were tasks important for the course that were not included in the survey, they were asked to list them.

Survey Methodology

Preliminary Information Gathering

Three legal-education documents played a key role in developing the survey: (1) the 1952 AALS statement on prelegal education; (2) *Preparation for Legal Education* (1996), prepared by the Pre-Law Committee of the ABA Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar; and (3) *Legal Education and Professional Development—An Educational Continuum* (1992), popularly known as the McCrate Report, which is a report of the "Task Force on Law Schools and the Profession: Narrowing the Gap," for the ABA Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar. These documents represent considered and consensus judgments of legal education professionals on the skills and tasks involved in legal education and thus provide a solid initial basis for a survey collecting judgments of law school faculty and students.

A second initial source of information for the survey instrument was a small, informal survey of law school faculty members recommended by their peers as having reflected on and studied legal education, and who would reflect the diversity of law schools and law professors involved with LSAC. We contacted 27 people by telephone and gave them the following instructions:

(1) Make a list of skills important for entering students to have for successful performance in law school. If you wish, you may organize your list in a way that shows their relationships and relative importance.

(2) Make a list of tasks that law students are required to perform for their classes. If you wish you may organize them to show their relationships and relative importance.

The directives were deliberately left somewhat general and vague so that the responses would help us to develop more focused questions and lists. Of the 27 people contacted, 15 sent lists. The respondents included 9 males and 6 females; 11 whites, 2 African Americans, and one Asian American; and 9 law school faculty and 6 academic support staff members.

From the lists sent by the respondents, together with the ABA and AALS statements, we compiled preliminary comprehensive lists of tasks involved in law school courses and skills necessary for success in law school.

The third preliminary step was to add to, refine, and verify those lists through focus groups held at three law schools in the Philadelphia area. The law schools were selected partly to assure that there would be minority representation among the students and faculty in the focus groups. At each law school we met with separate groups of four or five students and four or five faculty. The focus groups essentially verified the tasks compiled from the selected faculty members and the statements by the ABA and AALS. They also suggested several tasks and types of tasks not found on the preliminary lists, as well as other ideas that were later incorporated into the design of the survey instrument. For example, focus group participants suggested that we not ask about tasks for law school in general, but about tasks for specific courses. They also suggested that we try to distinguish courses by teaching methods, since they thought the tasks involved in courses would vary according to the teaching methods employed by the instructor.

We also used the focus groups to conduct a grouping exercise in which we asked faculty members to arrange the tasks from our list into groups that involved approximately the same underlying skill or skills. The data from this exercise were analyzed with a variety of hierarchical cluster analysis methods. The law school faculty participants exhibited a great deal of agreement about what tasks grouped together based on underlying skills. Moreover, the substantive content of the statistically identified clusters displayed a strong similarity to the categories suggested by the ABA lists and to the conceptual analyses done by LSAC staff. Consequently, we used essentially these categories to group the tasks conveniently for the survey.

Based on this work, an LSAC staff member who is a law school graduate helped develop a detailed list of 108 tasks involved in law school classes.

Development of the Survey Instrument

The list of 108 tasks was used to prepare a draft survey instrument in which law school students and professors would rank the importance of each task for a particular law school course.

As a trial, the survey was administered to the LSAC Test Development and Research Committee and to a small sample of students at several schools. In addition, it was discussed with admission professionals and law school faculty at the 1998 LSAC Annual Meeting and Educational Conference. On the basis of the trials and discussions, the list of tasks was shortened to 57 tasks in order to make survey completion easier and to make it more likely that recipients of the survey would take the time to complete it. Thus, the number of

tasks on the final survey represents an attempt to balance a concern for completeness with a desire for a reasonable response rate. An example of the final version of the survey used in data collection is found in Appendix A.

The Questions on the Survey

The main body of the survey (Question 4) contains a list of 57 tasks associated with work in law school, divided into 14 categories. The tasks fall into two basic types. Some are very concrete tasks, like answering exam questions and reading assignments. Others are more abstract, conceptually described tasks, like writing concisely or identifying the legal basis for a decision. Both kinds of tasks were included because both seemed to be informative about skills.

The 14 skill-related categories into which the tasks were grouped were derived from the skill-related groupings found in the AALS and ABA documents, the grouping exercises based on similarities of skills done in the faculty focus groups, and the natural and logical skill-related categories developed by the LSAC staff. The groupings from all three sources corresponded very highly. A hierarchical cluster analysis later performed on the survey results produced basically the same 14 categories plus the groupings into concrete and abstract tasks.

For the complete list of the tasks and the categories into which they are grouped, refer to Question 4 on the survey at Appendix A. The sample survey contains the complete descriptions of the tasks seen by the respondents. *The lists of tasks in the Figures and Tables contain only abbreviated names for the tasks that are closely related to but do not match exactly the descriptions in the survey.*

Question 4 of the survey uses a version of a Likert-Scale to ask law school students and faculty to rate, for a particular course, each of the 57 tasks. The ratings are "highly important," "moderately important," "somewhat important," or "not important/not applicable"; four boxes corresponding to the ratings follow each task and the respondent is asked to check the appropriate box. The other questions on the survey ask the respondent either to check a box corresponding to an answer or to write in a response.

To minimize the effect of the ordering of the tasks on the ratings of their importance, two versions of the survey were developed with the categories of tasks arranged in opposite orders. These two versions of the survey were spiraled when distributed so that half the respondents randomly saw the tasks in one order and the other half saw them in the opposite order.

To effectively evaluate what tasks were most important to success in law school, we felt that it was important to survey both faculty and students and compare their responses. Question 1 on the survey asks the respondent to indicate whether she or he is a faculty member or a student.

To determine whether the rating of the importance of tasks to success in law school courses might depend on how the class was taught and to collect information about how law school courses are taught, Question 2 on the survey asks the respondent to check a response identifying the format and teaching method in the course.

Since the list of 57 tasks might not fully cover the tasks necessary for success in any particular course, Question 5 asked the respondents whether the 57 tasks listed "include essentially all the tasks involved in success in the course," "include most of the tasks ... but do not include some others ...," "include some of the tasks ... but not many others ...," or "include few, if any ...."

There were also several open-ended questions on the survey, in response to which respondents could give detailed specific information. Regarding the format and method of teaching of the course, Question 3 asked the respondents to briefly describe any teaching techniques or methods used in the course other than lecture, Socratic method, and case study. After the question about the comprehensiveness of the list of tasks, Question 6 invited respondents to list any additional tasks involved in success in that particular course and to rate the importance of those tasks. Question 7 asked for any further comments respondents might have regarding the tasks required for success in the course.

Finally, the survey contained a page asking for demographic information, including gender, race or ethnic group, age, and primary language. We placed this page last on the survey to minimize any possible effect it might have on the answers to the other questions on the survey. We asked students what other courses they had taken in their first year of law school, giving them ten choices as well as offering them the opportunity to write in the names of other courses. We also asked students to estimate their first-year law school GPA and to give their undergraduate major. Faculty members were asked to list any other courses they had taught in the last two years and the school from which they had received their law degree.

Courses Included in the Survey

From the focus groups it was determined that the tasks required of law students could potentially vary significantly from course to course. For that reason the survey asks students and faculty to rate tasks in

particular courses, rather than for law school in general. This allowed us to compare the responses for different courses and groups of courses. The LSAT has historically been validated against first-year grades, so the list of courses to be surveyed includes those traditionally considered first-year courses at a significant number of law schools: Contracts, Torts, Criminal Law, Constitutional Law, Property, Civil Procedure, and Legal Research and Reasoning. To gain a broader picture of the importance of various tasks to the study of law, we surveyed students and faculty regarding some upper-level courses that were likely to be taught differently from the traditional core or first-year courses: Professional Responsibility, Alternative Dispute Resolution, any Clinical Course, an Appellate Course, Tax, and any Seminar. These courses are not intended to be representative of the upper-level curriculum in law school, but to include courses that would more fully capture the range of how law school courses are taught.

How the Surveys Were Distributed

Because first-year law students would not have received their grades in the courses they were currently taking and, thus, would not really know what was involved in succeeding in the course, we decided to survey second-year law students about their first-year courses. We asked the law schools to find a course or courses likely to be taken by all second-year students and to distribute the surveys about first-year courses to students in that course or those courses. We asked each law school to identify the first-year courses at that law school and labeled equal numbers of surveys with the name of each course. These were then randomly distributed to second-year students. Thus, each second-year student received a survey asking her or him to rate the importance of tasks for success in one of the first-year courses he or she had taken the preceding year. The surveys for the individual first-year courses were randomly distributed among second-year students and they could not choose the course they were commenting on. In the unlikely case that the course listed at the top of the survey was one he or she had not taken, the second-year student was asked to substitute a first-year course she or he had actually taken. Using this method meant that there was a time lapse between when the student took the course being asked about and when the survey information was collected. While this might result in some students forgetting some of what was involved in the course or being influenced by intervening factors, we believe that this was outweighed by the advantage of students having completed the entire course, having received a grade, and having had time to think about the experience in the course.

The method described above was not available for collecting data about upper-level courses. Some of the upper-level courses were offered in the third year, leaving no easy way to collect data from the students after they had completed the course, since they would have graduated. And students surveyed about courses offered in the second year would be scattered in a wide variety of courses in their third year, making it difficult to survey them at that time. For these reasons the surveys for upper-level courses were distributed to students while they were taking the course, but preferably towards the end of the course. While the students would not yet have completed the course and, thus, would not know their grade, they would already have completed at least a year of law school and would have some perspective on how to rate the tasks involved in a course currently being taken. In only a few instances third-year law students were asked to complete a survey about a second-year course that they had taken. In those cases the students were allowed to select the course for which to complete the survey. Thus, the course for which a student completed the survey depended upon either which survey she or he randomly received for first-year courses or which course he or she was enrolled in for upper-level courses. In neither case could students select a course, except for the small number of cases mentioned above.

Faculty members were given surveys and asked to indicate a course they were currently teaching or commonly taught. Thus, faculty members did have some leeway in choosing the course for which they would fill out the survey. However, their choices were limited by the courses they were teaching or had taught, and the distribution of responses for each school was constrained by the distribution of courses among faculty members.

The Sample of Schools Surveyed

All LSAC-member schools were invited to participate in the Skills Analysis Survey. All of those who agreed to participate were included in the study sample. In addition, several schools were recruited to participate to provide balance in the sample of schools and increase minority participation. Forty-one member schools agreed to distribute surveys to faculty, students, or both. The list of participating schools is found in Table 1.

TABLE 1

Number and type of surveys sent and returned, survey method used, and response rate for the schools included in the final report

	Schools	Number Sent First-Year	Number Sent Second-/ Third-Year	Number Sent Faculty	Total Number Returned	Number Returned Students	Number Returned Faculty	Number Returned Unidentified	Method of Collection	Response Rate
1	Campbell Univ. School of Law	100	220	20	259	240	14	5	P	76.2%
2	Univ. of Maryland School of Law	200	115	15	211	197	13	1	P	63.9%
3	Albany Law School of Union Univ.	215	300	35	186	165	19	2	I	33.8%
4	Univ. of Florida College of Law	200	20	50	187	176	9	2	C	69.3%
5	Inter American Univ. School of Law	205	15	45	171	168	2	1	P	64.5%
6	Capital Univ. Law School	270	620	55	139	122	16	1	I	14.7%
7	New York Univ. School of Law	450	0	0	135	134	0	1	I	30.0%
8	Southern Illinois Univ. School of Law	115	200	35	132	112	20	0	P	37.7%
9	Univ. of Calif. at Berkeley (Boalt Hall)	286	145	25	120	112	8	0	P	26.3%
10	Marquette Univ. Law School	140	205	40	114	89	25	0	P	29.6%
11	Univ. of Pittsburgh School of Law	200	0	0	101	89	12	0	I	50.5%
12	Univ. of San Diego School of Law	310	0	46	99	71	28	0	P	27.8%
13	North Carolina Central Univ. School of Law	120	155	20	95	81	13	1	C	32.2%
14	Yale Law School	150	150	50	92	77	15	0	P	26.3%
15	Louis D.Brandeis School of Law— Univ. of Louisville	125	0	0	89	89	0	0	P	71.2%
16	Syracuse Univ. College of Law	120	115	30	89	68	21	0	P	33.6%
17	William Mitchell College of Law	320	640	36	83	71	12	0	I	8.3%
18	Oklahoma City Univ. School of Law	170	0	40	82	64	18	0	P	39.0%
19	Univ. of Akron School of Law	165	400	55	81	60	21	0	I	13.1%
20	Duke Univ. School of Law	201	273	30	81	74	7	0	P	16.1%
21	Temple Univ. School of Law	350	0	65	80	61	18	1	I	19.3%
22	Univ. of Washington School of Law	165	360	30	80	78	1	1	P	14.4%
23	Univ. of Windsor Faculty of Law	60	130	18	79	70	8	1	I	38.0%
24	Univ. of Tulsa College of Law	150	550	50	78	64	14	0	I	10.4%
25	Washington Univ. School of Law	203	200	15	66	54	12	0	I	15.8%
26	Willamette Univ. College of Law	150	225	45	63	51	12	0	I	15.0%
27	Santa Clara Univ. School of Law	240	0	50	60	42	16	2	P	20.7%
28	Valparaiso Univ. School of Law	120	0	0	59	58	0	1	P	49.2%
29	Hamline Univ. School of Law	100	200	32	57	33	24	0	P	17.2%
30	Univ. of New Mexico School of Law	120	120	20	50	36	14	0	C	19.2%
31	Univ. of Connecticut School of Law	50	0	0	44	44	0	0	I	88.0%
32	Vanderbilt Univ. School of Law	175	0	20	43	36	7	0	I	22.1%
33	Univ. of California, Davis School of Law	0	270	0	41	41	0	0	I	15.2%
34	Univ. of Puerto Rico School of Law	125	0	0	39	39	0	0	I	31.2%
35	South Texas College of Law	195	0	31	25	25	0	0	I	11.1%
36	Univ. of Nebraska College of Law	120	0	0	24	24	0	0	I	20.0%
37	Univ. of North Carolina School of Law	0	0	40	22	0	22	0	P	55.0%
38	Dalhousie Law School	150	290	20	21	21	0	0	I	4.6%
39	Boston College Law School	0	0	47	15	0	15	0	I	31.9%
40	Stetson Univ. College of Law	0	0	20	13	0	13	0	P	65.0%
41	Univ. of Houston Law Center	0	0	35	8	0	8	0	I	22.9%
	Miscellaneous Schools				12	12	0	0		
	Totals	6,535	5,918	1,165	3,525	3,048	457	20		25.9%

Key: Method of Collection: I = Individually Mailed to LSAC, P = Professor Collected, C = Combination of I and P

Despite being mostly self-selected, the total sample of law schools was found to be highly similar to the total population of LSAC law schools in terms of geographic distribution, size, school average LSAT score, school undergraduate GPA, and percentage of minority students in the school. The comparison was based on data gathered about matriculants during the 1996–97 application year.

Because it was important that the survey data include the judgments of minority law students and faculty, we included in the sample law schools with relatively high percentages of minority students. The distribution of the percentages of minority students in schools in the school sample is similar to the distribution of the percentages of minority students in the total distribution of all LSAC member schools, with the sample schools having a slightly higher mean percentage than the total of LSAC member schools.

While the geographic distribution of schools in the sample is not exactly the same as the geographic distribution of LSAC schools, the sample contains some schools from every official LSAC geographic region, including Puerto Rico and Canada, and most regions are well represented.

Data Acquisition

To encourage school participation, schools were offered several different options for distributing and collecting the surveys. Schools could choose to distribute surveys about randomly selected first-year courses to second-year students; surveys about upper-level courses they were currently taking to upper-level students; surveys about first-year and upper-level courses they were teaching or had taught to faculty members; or any combination of these. In addition, schools could choose (1) to both distribute and collect the surveys, (2) to distribute the surveys along with postage-paid envelopes, or (3) a combination of these. Students and faculty given surveys along with postage-paid envelopes mailed their surveys directly to LSAC. For each school in the sample, Table 1 contains the number of surveys sent, the number of surveys returned, the method of collection used, and the resulting response rate.

Of the 41 schools, 7 only distributed surveys about first-year courses to second-year students; one only distributed surveys about upper-level courses to upper-level students; 4 only distributed surveys about first-year or upper-level courses to faculty; and 6 only distributed surveys about first-year courses to second-year students and to faculty. The remaining 23 schools distributed surveys to all three groups.

Of the 13,618 surveys distributed to the schools, 3,525 were returned, which is a response rate of 26%. Of these, 3,048 were returned by students and 457 were returned by faculty (20 did not give their faculty or student status). School response rates ranged from 4.6% (21 out of 460 surveys mailed to the school were returned) to 88% (44 out of 50 surveys mailed to the school were returned). The largest number of surveys returned by any one school was 259.

While giving schools many different options for distributing and collecting the surveys helped encourage school participation, it did result in the sample of respondents not being as representative as the sample of schools was.

The Student and Faculty Participant Sample

While some law schools both distributed and collected the surveys, other schools distributed the surveys with return envelopes, and students and faculty could choose whether to fill out and return the survey. Moreover, the students in classes surveyed at a particular school might not be representative of the student body at that school. So self-selection and convenience played a role in determining the sample of students and faculty. Table 2 compares the students in the survey sample with 1998–99 LSAT takers. Table 3 compares the faculty in the survey sample with the law faculty listed in the 1997–98 AALS Directory of Law Teachers. It should be noted that the demographic information from the survey and from LSAT takers is self-reported. We do not know how the information in the AALS Directory was acquired.

The reported distribution of students in our sample was very similar to that of 1998–99 LSAT takers (Table 2). However, the percentage of reported Black/African American participants in the survey sample is somewhat lower than that in the test taker population, despite the fact that the sample contains responses from one historically black law school and that law schools with high percentages of minority students are slightly overrepresented in the sample. Because the survey sample is composed of second-year or higher law students, who are on average older than LSAT takers, as expected, the sample of survey respondents is slightly older than 1998–99 test takers. The gender and ethnic distributions of the faculty survey sample are comparable to the gender and ethnic distributions of the faculty list on the AALS 1997–98 Directory of Law Teachers (Table 3).

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TABLE 2
Comparison of skills analysis final sample and 1998–99 LSAT taker student distribution

	Female	Male	No Response
Skills Final Sample	50.6	45.7	3.8
1998–99 LSAT Takers	50.6	49.0	0.4

Ethnicity	Skills Final Sample	1998–99 LSAT Takers
Aboriginal Indian/American Indian/Alaskan Native	0.8	0.8
Asian/Asian American/Pacific Islander	5.6	7.5
Black/ African American	5.1	10.7
Latino(a)/Chicano(a)/Puerto Rican/or other Hispanic	9.1	7.9
White/Caucasian	71.0	66.8
Other	2.4	4.2
No Response	6.1	1.9

Age	<21	21–24	25–39	>39	No Response
Skills Final Sample	.03	22.5	66.3	5.5	5.7
1998–99 LSAT Takers	6.4	53.1	34.4	6.1	.02

TABLE 3
Comparison of skills analysis final faculty sample and 1997–98 Directory of Law Teachers. (The directory does not provide information about nonresponse for gender or ethnicity.)

	Female	Male	No Response
Faculty in Skills Final Sample	35.4	57.1	7.4
1997–98 Directory of Law Teachers	30.2	69.8	

Ethnicity	Skills Final Sample	1997–98 Directory of Law Teachers
Aboriginal Indian/American Indian/Alaskan Native	0.0	0.4
Asian/Asian American/ Pacific Islander	1.8	1.8
Black/African American	3.9	7.1
Latino(a)/Chicano(a)/Puerto Rican/or other Hispanic	1.8	3.1
White/Caucasian	80.7	86.8
Other	1.8	0.0
No Response	10.1	

Data Analysis

Descriptive Statistics

The survey data are in the form of demographic information, task ratings, and survey responses to categorical questions. The demographic information has been summarized above. For the task ratings, means and frequencies were calculated for the overall set of respondents. The means were also calculated for the respondents grouped by sex, by student or teacher status, by law school course, and by the demographic variables of ethnic group and primary language. Percentages were calculated for the survey questions concerning courses, whether the list includes all necessary tasks, and method of teaching. These results are displayed in figures and tables and provide a graphical way to assess the cohesiveness of the data and how similar or different task mean ratings are for different groups within the data.

Inferential Statistics

Two sets of significance tests were performed on the three group comparisons of primary interest—students vs. faculty, male respondents vs. female respondents, and first-year course respondents vs. upper-level course respondents. The first set of tests consists of analysis of variance tests to examine the group differences in the data—whether or not the mean rating values for different task groups differ for various respondent groupings. The second set consists of chi-square (χ^2) loglinear tests to see if the respondent groups rated tasks similarly within tasks and within respondent groups. Taken together, these two sets of analyses provide an inferential measure of how consistently our respondent groups rated the 57 tasks, both across tasks and within tasks.

Analysis of variance: The multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) is appropriate for assessing the group differences in these data. The MANOVA uses demographic and group variables, such as gender, student or teacher status, and course level, to predict responses on the different tasks for each of the 14 categories of tasks.

Separate MANOVAs could be performed for each of the three respondent groupings, but a better way is to use a model in which all the group values are used to simultaneously predict task category means. This allows us to interpret the predictive value for each respondent group while controlling for the effects of the other groups.

The inferential statistic of interest for the MANOVAs is the Wilk's Λ statistic. This statistic measures the disparity between group means on the tasks—the larger the disparity, the smaller the Λ value, and the smaller the *p*-value associated with it. The *p*-value that is associated with Λ can be compared to a predetermined value to see if the differences within task categories are significant. However, differences that are significant can be of little practical use, especially when sample sizes are as large as they are here, and so we use a multivariate measure of practical significance, η, that is equal to $1-\Lambda$. The square root of η is analogous to a correlation coefficient—the larger the value, the stronger the relationship between group membership and task rating. A correlation of .3 is usually the smallest that is considered to be of practical predictive value in social science research, so an η value that is larger than .09, the square of .3, may be a useful standard of practicality for these data.

What should the predetermined *p*-value be for the significance tests? The norm is to use $p = .05$. However, as there are 14 tests—one for each task category—being performed for each respondent grouping, the *p*-value should be corrected so that Type I (false positive) errors can be minimized. The Bonferroni correction is appropriate and simple to use, because it consists of dividing .05 by the number of tests that will be performed. Dividing the .05 value by 14 produces .0036, and so only *p*-values less than this will indicate significance. Finally, post hoc tests can be performed on the means within each task category if necessary. A Tukey Least Significant Difference (LSD) test can be performed for those task groups that have significant *p*-values and large effect sizes, and the results of these tests aid in the interpretation of the η value.

Chi-square tests: Another way to view the data is to look within tasks and examine the ratings to see whether these respondent groups rate the same tasks in the same way. Such a process clarifies the within-task ratings in a way that analysis of variance, with its overall mean values, does not. A suitable method for this is to use a form of categorical modeling, known as log-linear modeling, in which chi-square significance tests are used to show if the different variables—respondent group, task, and rating—are independent of one another. If the chi-square statistic χ^2 associated with the log-linear model has a *p*-value less than some predetermined value, then the different variables can be considered not independent.

The calculation of the *p*-values here uses the same Bonferroni method as was used with the multiple MANOVA tests. An appropriate set of models for these data use each of the three data groupings—male/female, faculty/students, first-year/upper-level—separately to predict ratings within each task category to start with. This means there are 3 x 14, or 42 initial significance tests; The standard *p*-value, 0.05, divided by 42 yields a *p*-value of 0.0012. For each task set, the only one of interest is the one that assesses independence of the interaction of task group ratings by data grouping by task category. If the χ^2 values for any task category is found significant at the 0.0012 level, then those tasks will be further examined one by one to see where the rating differences lie.

Survey Results

Question: What tasks and categories of tasks are most important for success in law school courses in general?

Figures 1A and 1B summarize the responses to the survey by all respondents for all courses by task. The names of the tasks are abbreviated and next to the abbreviated name, in parentheses, is an abbreviation for the category to which the tasks belong (see the key for these abbreviations at Appendix B). For example, WR represents the category Writing. In the bar graphs, each bar represents a task and the proportion of the bar in each type of shading represents the proportion of responses for "highly important," "moderately important," "somewhat important," and "not important/not applicable." The number associated with each bar is the mean rating of that task for all respondents where highly important is valued 4; moderately important, 3; somewhat important, 2, and not important/not applicable, 1.

FIGURE 1a. *Proportion of responses for all respondents for each task ordered by category, including mean values, for the first 29 tasks (N = 3,525)*

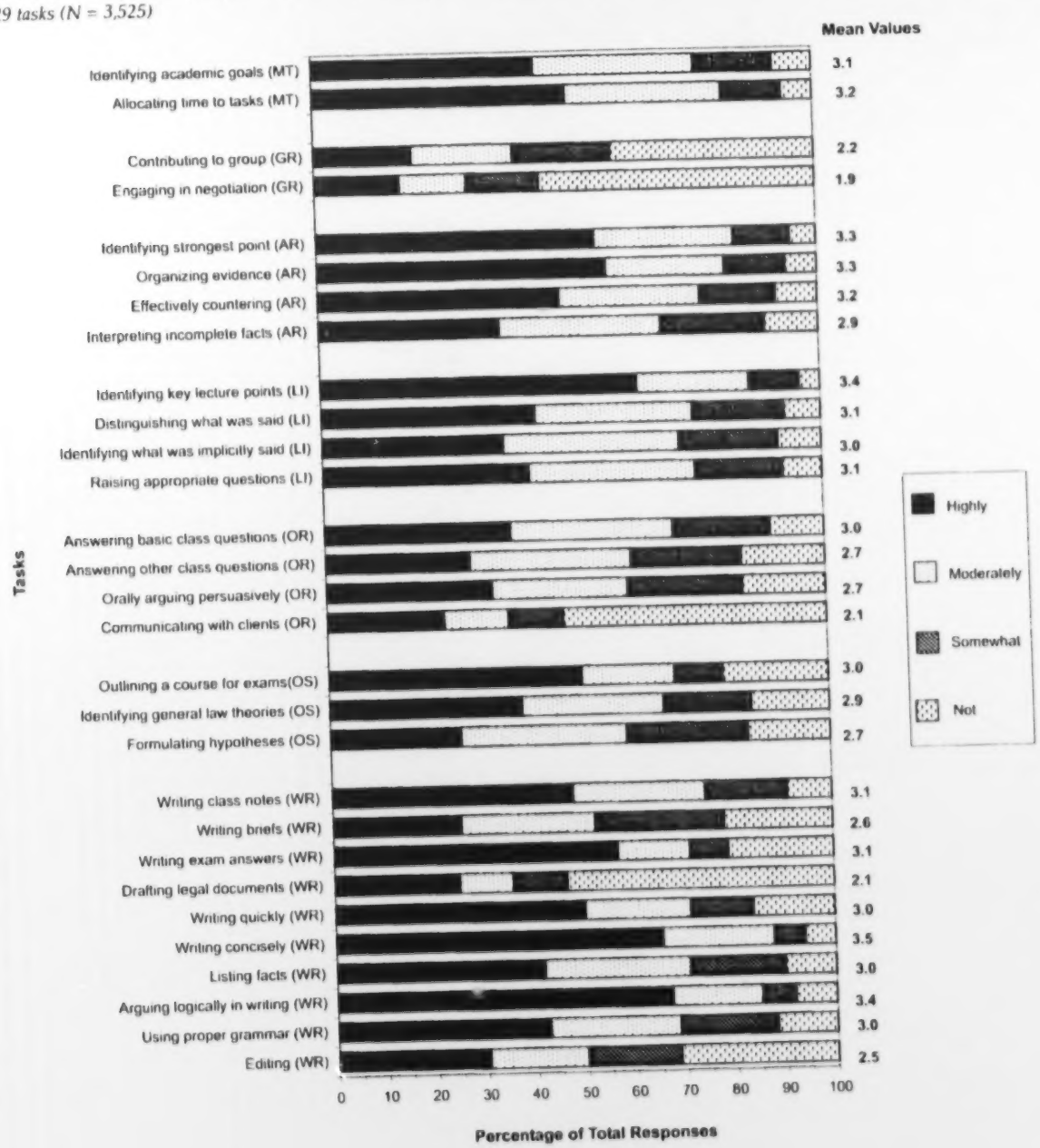
Mean Values
Identifying academic goals (MT) 3.1
Allocating time to tasks (MT) 3.2
Contributing to group (GR) 2.2
Engaging in negotiation (GR) 1.9
Identifying strongest point (AR) 3.3
Organizing evidence (AR) 3.3
Effectively countering (AR) 3.2
Interpreting incomplete facts (AR) 2.9
Identifying key lecture points (LI) 3.4
Distinguishing what was said (LI) 3.1
Identifying what was implicitly said (LI) 3.0
Raising appropriate questions (LI) 3.1
Answering basic class questions (OR) 3.0
Answering other class questions (OR) 2.7
Orally arguing persuasively (OR) 2.7
Communicating with clients (OR) 2.1
Outlining a course for exams(OS) 3.0
Identifying general law theories (OS) 2.9
Formulating hypotheses (OS) 2.7
Writing class notes (WR) 3.1
Writing briefs (WR) 2.6
Writing exam answers (WR) 3.1
Drafting legal documents (WR) 2.1
Writing quickly (WR) 3.0
Writing concisely (WR) 3.5
Listing facts (WR) 3.0
Arguing logically in writing (WR) 3.4
Using proper grammar (WR) 3.0
Editing (WR) 2.5
Tasks
0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100
Percentage of Total Responses
Highly
Moderately
Somewhat
Not

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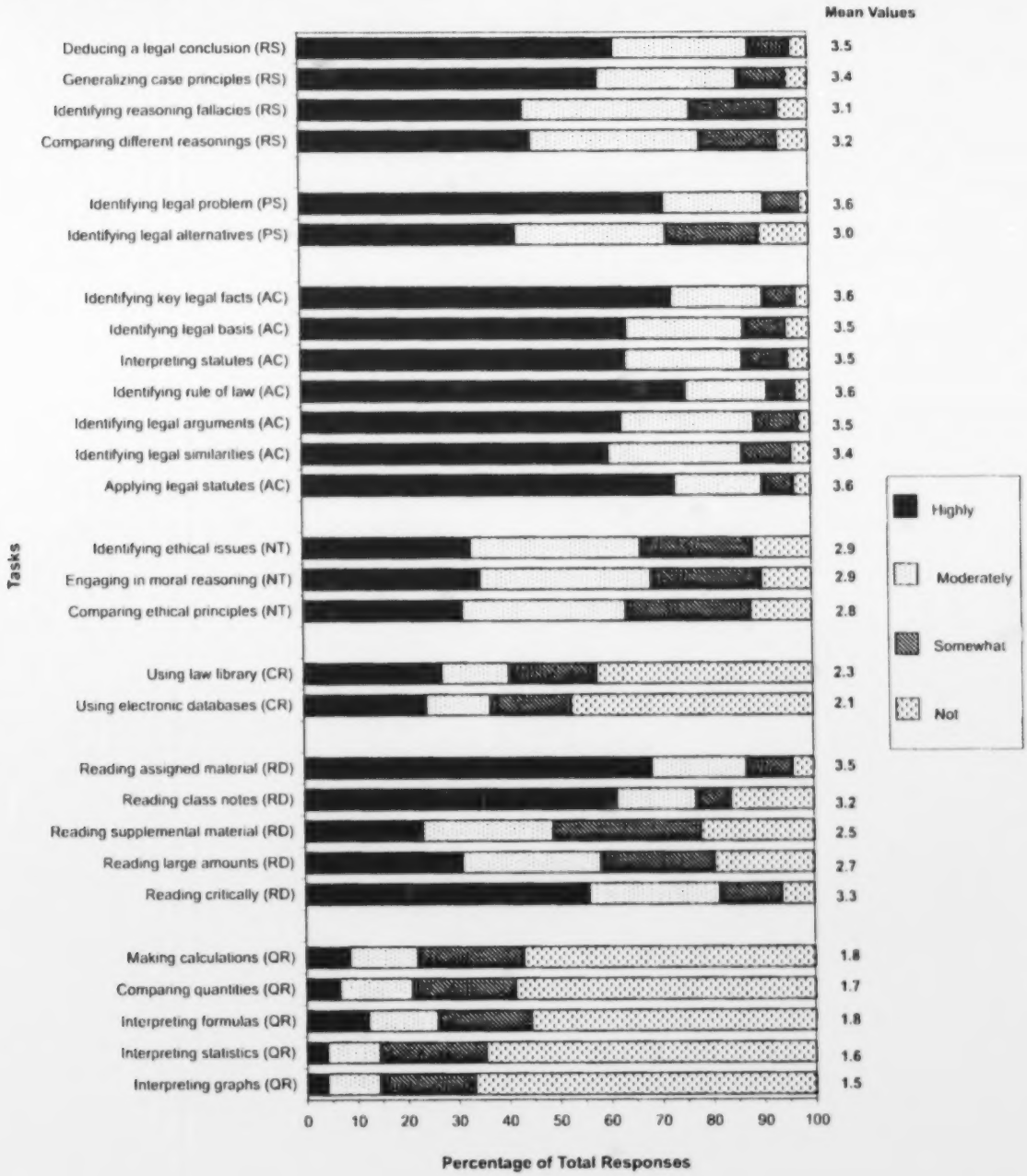
FIGURE 1b. *Proportion of responses for all respondents for each task ordered by category, including mean values, for the last 28 tasks (N = 3,525)*


Mean Values
Deducing a legal conclusion (RS) 3.5
Generalizing case principles (RS) 3.4
Identifying reasoning fallacies (RS) 3.1
Comparing different reasonings (RS) 3.2
Identifying legal problem (PS) 3.6
Identifying legal alternatives (PS) 3.0
Identifying key legal facts (AC) 3.6
Identifying legal basis (AC) 3.5
Interpreting statutes (AC) 3.5
Identifying rule of law (AC) 3.6
Identifying legal arguments (AC) 3.5
Identifying legal similarities (AC) 3.4
Applying legal statutes (AC) 3.6
Identifying ethical issues (NT) 2.9
Engaging in moral reasoning (NT) 2.9
Comparing ethical principles (NT) 2.8
Using law library (CR) 2.3
Using electronic databases (CR) 2.1
Reading assigned material (RD) 3.5
Reading class notes (RD) 3.2
Reading supplemental material (RD) 2.5
Reading large amounts (RD) 2.7
Reading critically (RD) 3.3
Making calculations (QR) 1.8
Comparing quantities (QR) 1.7
Interpreting formulas (QR) 1.8
Interpreting statistics (QR) 1.6
Interpreting graphs (QR) 1.5
Tasks
0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100
Percentage of Total Responses
Highly
Moderately
Somewhat
Not

The most important tasks and categories of tasks for success in law school, in the judgments of the respondents, will be those with the highest mean scores and those rated highly important or moderately important by the most respondents. One way to rank the tasks and categories is to place them in tiers corresponding to levels of mean ratings of importance. All of the tasks with mean ratings of 2.5 or above can reasonably be said to have some degree of importance in law school courses generally. The following tiers represent what appear to be groupings of importance inherent in the data, as indicated in Figure 2:

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Tier I (Mean rating of 3.4 or higher): Highly Important

(1) All seven Analyzing Cases or Legal Problems tasks
- Identifying key legal facts and issues (3.6)
- Identifying a principle or rule of law operating in a case (3.6)
- Applying a case, rule or legal statute to a hypothetical case (3.6)
- Identifying the basis for a legal decision (3.5)
- Interpreting statutes in relation to a case or problem (3.5)
- Identifying and evaluating the legal arguments in a case (3.5)
- Identifying similarities and differences between cases and problems (3.4)

(2) Two of ten Writing tasks
- Writing concisely and with clarity (3.5)
- Arguing logically and persuasively (3.4)

(3) Two of four Reasoning tasks
- Deducing a legal conclusion (3.5)
- Generalizing or synthesizing principles or rules from cases (3.4)

(4) One of two Problem Solving tasks
- Identifying a legal problem and the legal issues involved (3.6)

(5) One of five Reading tasks
- Reading assigned materials (3.5)

(6) One of four Listening tasks
- Identifying key points in lectures and discussions (3.4)

Tier II (Mean rating of 3.0 to 3.3): Important

(1) Both Managing Time tasks
- Allocating time to tasks based on priorities (3.2)
- Identifying goals, priorities, and the tasks necessary to them (3.1)

(2) Three of four Constructing Arguments tasks
- Identifying the strongest evidence or reasons for or against a position (3.3)
- Organizing evidence and reasons into a logical argument (3.3)
- Countering or rebutting evidence or arguments against a position (3.2)

(3) Three of four Listening tasks
- Distinguishing precisely what was said and not said (3.1)
- Raising appropriate questions and arguments in response (3.1)
- Identifying what is implicit in what was said (3.0)

(4) One of four Communicating Orally tasks
- Answering basic class questions about assigned readings (3.0)

(5) One of three Organizing and Synthesizing tasks
- Outlining a course for final exams (3.0)

(6) Five of ten Writing tasks
- Writing class notes (3.1)
- Writing answers to exam questions (3.1)
- Writing quickly and fluently under time pressure (3.0)
- Listing or describing facts (3.0)
- Using proper grammar, punctuation, and spelling (3.0)

(7) Two of four Reasoning tasks
- Identifying and comparing patterns of reasoning (3.2)
- Identifying contradictions and flawed reasoning (3.1)

(8) One of two Problem Solving tasks
- Identifying alternatives and developing a plan of action (3.0)

(9) Two of five Reading tasks
- Reading critically and interactively (3.3)
- Reading class notes (3.2)

Tier III (2.5 to 2.9): Somewhat Important

(1) One of four Constructing Arguments tasks
- Interpreting or shading incomplete information to support a conclusion (2.9)

(2) Two of three Organizing and Synthesizing tasks
- Identifying and assessing general theories that unify areas of law (2.9)
- Formulating hypotheses to account for information (2.7)

(3) Two of four Communicating Orally tasks
- Answering questions about unassigned hypothetical cases (2.7)
- Orally arguing persuasively (2.7)

(4) Two of ten Writing tasks
- Writing briefs (2.6)
- Editing (2.5)

(4) All three Normative Thinking tasks
- Identifying ethical and policy issues (2.9)
- Engaging in reasoning involving moral or policy principles (2.9)
- Comparing the weight of competing ethical or policy considerations (2.8)

(5) Two of the five Reading tasks
- Reading large amounts of material under time constraints (2.7)
- Reading supplemental materials (2.5)

Tier IV (below 2.5)

(1) One of four Communicating Orally tasks
- Communicating orally with a client (2.1)

(2) One of ten Writing tasks
- Drafting a legal document (2.1)

(3) Both of the Conducting Research tasks
- Using the law library and references (2.3)
- Using electronic databases (2.1)

(4) Both of the Working as Part of a Group or Interpersonally tasks
- Contributing to a group assignment or discussion group (2.2)
- Engaging in negotiation, conflict resolution, or arbitration (1.9)

(5) All five of the Quantitative Reasoning tasks
- Making calculations (1.8)
- Interpreting and applying formulas (1.8)
- Comparing quantities (1.7)
- Interpreting statistics (1.6)
- Interpreting graphical representations (1.5)

The skill-related categories of tasks also can be ranked in the same four tiers based on the importance of their members, with Tier I categories having tasks predominantly in Tier I, Tier II categories having tasks predominantly in Tiers II and I, Tier III categories having tasks predominantly in Tiers III and II, and Tier IV categories having tasks predominantly in Tier IV. The fit of these categories to the responses can be seen in Figure 2.

Tier I: Analyzing Cases or Legal Problems

Tier II: Problem Solving, Reasoning, Writing, Reading, Listening, Constructing Arguments, and Managing Time

Tier III: Communicating Orally, Organizing and Synthesizing, and Normative Thinking

Tier IV: Conducting Research, Working as Part of a Group or Interpersonally, and Quantitative Reasoning

Task Mean Ratings

	AC	PS	RS	WR	RD	LI	AR	MT	OR	OS	NT	CR	GR	QR
4.0														
3.9														
3.8														
3.7														
3.6	111	1												
3.5	111		1	1	1									
3.4	1		1	1		1								
3.3					1		11							
3.2			1		1		1	1						
3.1			1	11		11		1						
3.0		1		111		1			1	1				
2.9							1			1	11			
2.8											1			
2.7					1				11	1				
2.6				1										
2.5				1	1									
2.4														
2.3												1		
2.2													1	
2.1				1					1			1		
2.0														
1.9													1	
1.8														11
1.7														1
1.6														1
1.5														1
1.4														
1.3														

Skills-Related Categories of Tasks

	Tier I
	Tier II
	Tier III
	Tier IV

AC		Analyzing Cases or Legal Problem
PS		Problem Solving
RS		Reasoning
WR		Writing
RD		Reading
LI		Listening
AR		Constructing Arguments
MT		Managing Time
OR		Communicating Orally
OS		Organizing and Synthesizing
NT		Normative Thinking
CR		Conducting Research
GR		Working as Part of a Group or Interpersonally
QR		Quantitative Reasoning
1	**=**	**one task**

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The proportions of respondents rating the tasks as highly or moderately important also support these rankings of tasks and categories.

50% or More of Respondents Rated Highly Important

7 of 7 Analyzing Cases or Legal Problems tasks
3 of 5 Reading tasks
3 of 10 Writing tasks
2 of 4 Reasoning tasks
2 of 4 Constructing Argument tasks
1 of 2 Problem Solving tasks
1 of 3 Organizing and Synthesizing tasks
1 of 4 Listening tasks

50% or More of Respondents Rated Moderately Important or Higher

7 of 7 Analyzing Cases or Legal Problems tasks
4 of 5 Reading tasks
8 of 10 Writing tasks
4 of 4 Reasoning tasks
4 of 4 Constructing Argument tasks
2 of 2 Problem Solving tasks
3 of 3 Organizing and Synthesizing tasks
4 of 4 Listening tasks
3 of 4 Communicating Orally tasks
2 of 2 Managing Time tasks
3 of 3 Normative Thinking tasks

The category of tasks clearly ranked as most important is Analyzing Cases or Legal Problems. The mean ratings of all of the tasks in this category are 3.4 or above. The skills that directly apply to these tasks are taught in law school and are not expected of entering law students. However, the basic skills of critical reading, analyzing texts and arguments, and reasoning are the foundations of the legal analysis skills taught in law school and these basic skills are among those the current version of the LSAT seeks to assess.

The second tier of categories includes Reasoning, Problem Solving, Reading, Constructing Arguments, Managing Time, Writing, and Listening. Reasoning, Problem Solving, Constructing Arguments, and Reading all involve skills that the current LSAT seeks to assess. While the current LSAT requires that test takers manage time over a short term, it does not test the kind of time management required of a student over an entire course, and it is not clear how that could be measured on a single-day standardized test. Two other categories of tasks—Writing and Listening—involve skills that are not currently assessed by the LSAT. The ratings of importance of the tasks in these categories in the survey suggest that the skills involved in these categories of tasks are also fundamental to success in law school and that LSAC ought to consider testing them.

Two of the Reading tasks and three of the Writing tasks were rated a good deal lower than the other tasks in the second tier. However, most of these tasks—reading large amounts, reading supplemental materials, writing briefs, editing, and drafting legal documents—are highly specific tasks that do not appear to be important in most law school courses, even though other Reading and Writing tasks are very important. Therefore, we do not believe that they detract from the importance of reading and writing skills generally.

Since tasks with a mean score of 2.5 or above can appropriately be judged to have been identified by respondents as having some degree of importance, the categories in the third tier—Organizing and Synthesizing, Communicating Orally, and Normative Thinking—include tasks that also are important to success in law school courses, although not to the extent or not so generally as the tasks in the higher tiers. Of the categories in the third tier, Organizing and Synthesizing skills are tested in different ways by each of the three item types on the current LSAT. The current LSAT also contains Logical Reasoning and Reading Comprehension passages that discuss ethical and public policy issues. In this way, some of the skills involved in the Normative Thinking category of tasks are indirectly tested. Skills in the Communicating Orally category are not assessed on the LSAT, since they cannot easily be tested in a paper and pencil format. However, the survey suggests that these skills are important in law school courses and law schools may want to consider ways to gather information about them.

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Three categories of tasks—Conducting Research, Working as Part of a Group or Interpersonally, and Quantitative Reasoning—were rated as considerably less important than the others on the list, with most mean ratings below 2.3. All of the tasks in these categories were rated as highly important by less than 30% of the respondents and as not important by more than 40%. While the breakdown of the survey results for individual courses and the answers to the open-ended questions indicate that some of these tasks are important in some law school courses, the overall survey results indicate that the skills involved in these tasks are probably not fundamental to success in law school generally.

Question: Do faculty and students rate the importance of tasks for law school courses differently?

Figures 3a and 3b compare the task mean ratings of faculty and students for the 57 tasks. The tasks are listed along the horizontal axis and the ratings on the vertical axis. The boxes represent the responses of faculty and the dots the responses of students.

FIGURE 3a. *Comparison of student and faculty task mean ratings for the first 29 tasks (N = 3,505)*

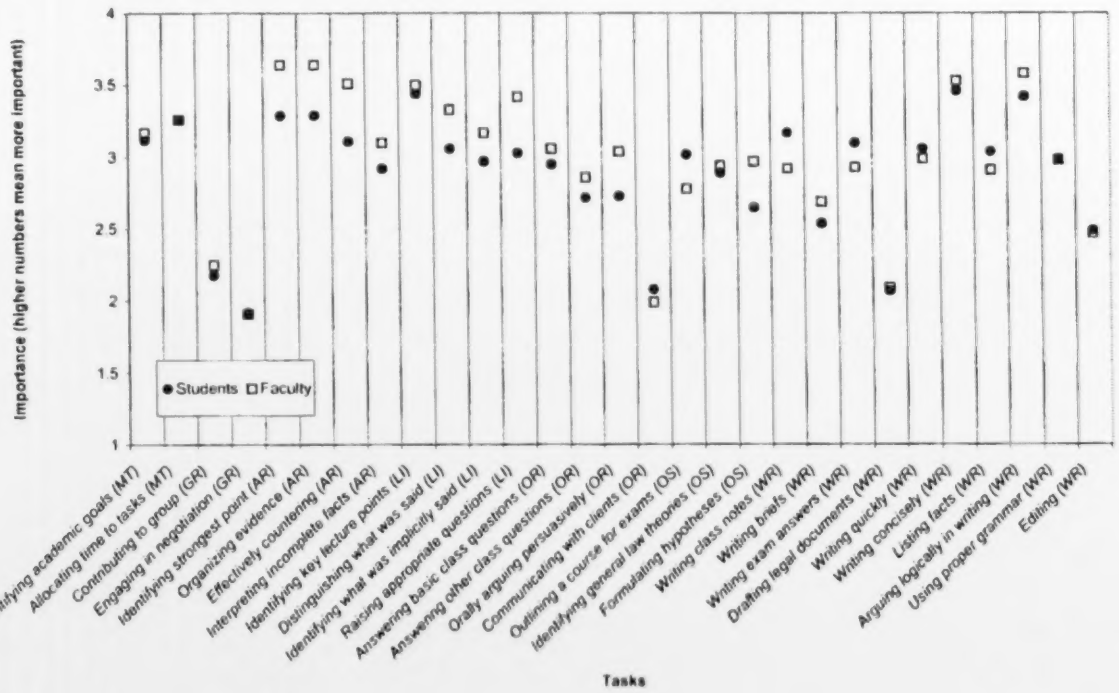

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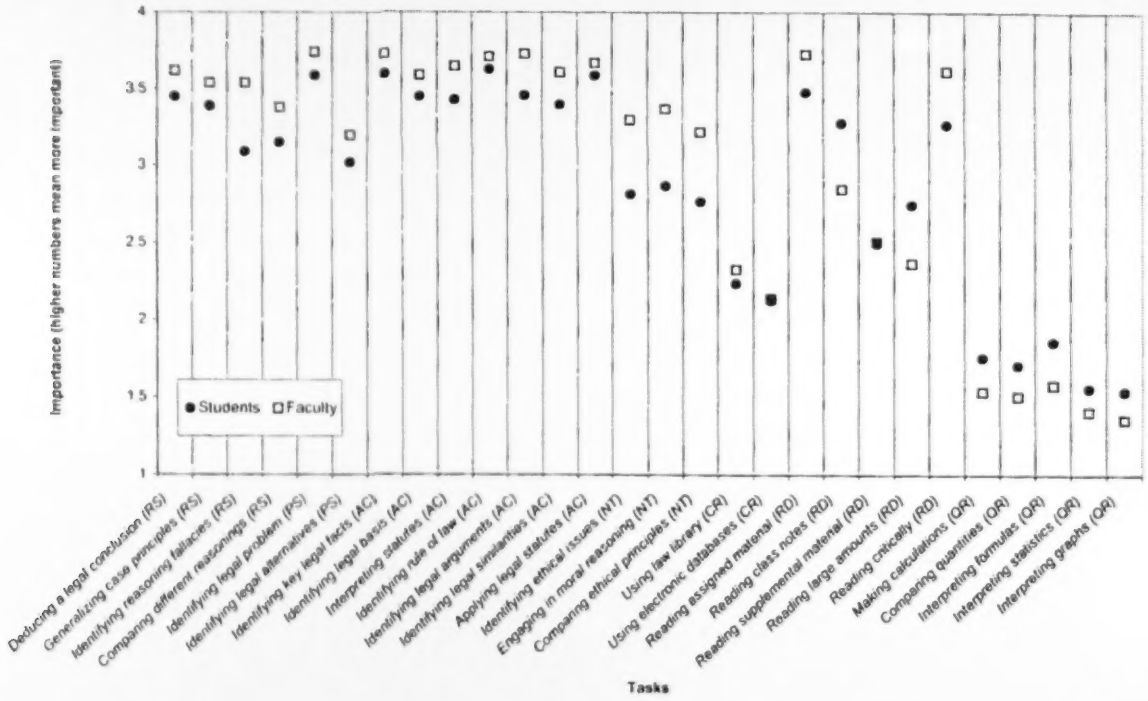
FIGURE 3b. *Comparison of student and faculty task mean ratings for the last 28 tasks (N = 3,505)*



These figures show that the mean ratings of the tasks by students and faculty are very similar, with faculty generally rating the tasks as more important than students do, but with the pattern of relative ratings of both groups being similar. Tasks rated higher by faculty were generally rated higher by students and those rated lower by faculty were generally rated lower by students. The ratings of tasks in the categories of Managing Time, Working as Part of a Group or Interpersonally, and Conducting Research are very similar for faculty and students. However, faculty respondents generally rated Analyzing Cases or Legal Problems, Listening, Oral Communication, Constructing Arguments, Reasoning, and Normative Thinking tasks as more important than did students—in some cases significantly more important. These differences are especially large for Normative Thinking tasks and for some of the Reasoning and Constructing Arguments tasks.

Because there are so many more student responses than faculty responses in the survey, the task mean ratings for all respondents are very heavily influenced by the student responses. Since faculty rated many tasks and groups of tasks as more highly important than students did, we also looked at how the tasks and categories of tasks would be ranked differently if the faculty task mean ratings were used, rather than the student task mean ratings. Table 4 compares the task mean ratings for all respondents, faculty, and students for tasks that faculty ratings placed in a higher tier than student ratings and the ratings of all respondents did.

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TABLE 4
Comparison of task mean ratings for faculty, students, and all respondents for the tasks faculty ranked higher than students did

Tasks	Task Mean Ratings and Tiers		
	Faculty	Students	All
Constructing Arguments			
Identifying the strongest evidence or reasons for or against a position	3.6, Tier I	3.3, Tier II	3.3, Tier II
Organizing evidence and reasons into a logical Argument	3.6, Tier I	3.3, Tier II	3.3, Tier II
Countering or rebutting evidence or arguments against a position	3.5, Tier I	3.1, Tier II	3.2, Tier II
Interpreting or shading incomplete information to support a conclusion	3.1, Tier II	2.9, Tier III	2.9, Tier III
Reasoning			
Identifying contradictions and flawed reasoning	3.5, Tier I	3.1, Tier II	3.1, Tier II
Identifying and comparing patterns of reasoning	3.4, Tier I	3.2, Tier II	3.2, Tier II
Normative Thinking			
Engaging in reasoning involving moral or policy principles	3.4, Tier I	2.9, Tier III	2.9, Tier III
Identifying ethical and policy issues	3.3, Tier II	2.8, Tier III	2.9, Tier III
Comparing the weight of competing ethical or policy considerations	3.2, Tier II	2.8, Tier III	2.8, Tier III
Listening			
Raising appropriate questions and arguments in response	3.4, Tier I	3.0, Tier II	3.1, Tier II
Communicating Orally			
Orally arguing persuasively	3.0, Tier II	2.7, Tier III	2.7, Tier III
Reading			
Reading critically	3.6, Tier I	3.3, Tier II	3.3, Tier II

There are three categories of tasks in which faculty rated a significant number of tasks in a different tier than students did. Faculty rated all three Normative Thinking tasks as considerably more important than students did, suggesting that faculty consider ethical and policy reasoning to be more important in the courses than students do. Two Normative Thinking tasks—engaging in moral reasoning and identifying ethical issues—were rated as highly important by 50% or more of the faculty, whereas none of the Normative Thinking tasks were identified as highly important by 50% or more of the students. And the mean ratings of the faculty for one of the three Normative Thinking tasks place it in Tier I, and for two of the tasks, place them in Tier II, whereas the mean ratings of both students and all respondents place them in Tier III. Faculty also placed Constructing Arguments tasks in different tiers than students did. Faculty ratings placed three of the four Constructing Arguments tasks in Tier I and the fourth in Tier II, whereas students ratings placed three of the four Constructing Arguments tasks in Tier II and one in Tier III. For faculty the category Constructing Arguments falls in Tier I, rather than Tier II, where it falls when ranked for all respondents. In addition, faculty ranked all four of the Reasoning tasks in Tier I, while students ranked two in Tier I and two in Tier II. Thus, for faculty, the Reasoning category also falls in Tier I, whereas it falls in Tier II when ranked for all respondents. The rankings of categories of tasks for faculty and for all respondents are compared below:

Faculty

Tier I
Analyzing Cases or Legal Problems
Reasoning
Constructing Arguments

Tier II
Problem Solving
Writing
Reading
Listening
Managing Time
Normative Thinking

Tier III
Communicating Orally
Organizing and Synthesizing

All Respondents

Tier I
Analyzing Cases or Legal Problems

Tier II
Reasoning
Constructing Arguments
Problem Solving
Writing
Reading
Listening
Managing Time

Tier III
Normative Thinking
Communicating Orally
Organizing and Synthesizing

Tier IV	Tier IV
Conducting Research	Conducting Research
Working as Part of a Group/Interpersonally	Working as Part of a Group/Interpersonally
Quantitative Reasoning	Quantitative Reasoning

Faculty also rated several individual tasks in different tiers than students did. These include "raising appropriate questions and arguments in response" in the Listening category, "orally arguing persuasively" in the Communicating Orally category, and "reading critically" in the Reading category. These differences in rankings of tasks do not affect the overall rankings of these categories for faculty, but it is noteworthy that faculty generally rated Listening and Communicating Orally tasks higher than students did.

Students did rate some tasks as more important than faculty did, including some which they placed in a different tier. Faculty ratings ranked "outlining a course for final exams" (OS), "writing class notes" (WR), "writing answers to exam questions" (WR), "listing or describing facts" (WR), and "reading class notes" (RD) in Tier III, whereas student ratings placed them in Tier II. Faculty ratings placed "reading large amounts" (RD) in Tier IV, whereas student ratings placed it in Tier III. However, in all these cases, the differences in the ratings were small and the overall rankings matched those of the students. Students also rated all four Quantitative Reasoning tasks somewhat higher than faculty did, although they fell in Tier IV for both groups. It is noteworthy that most of the tasks rated as more important by students are concrete, practical tasks oriented toward preparing for the final examination, while the tasks considered more important by faculty tend to be more abstract and conceptual in nature. This mirrors comments made in the student and faculty focus groups. It is also noteworthy that students placed higher importance than faculty did on writing quickly and reading large amounts. This may indicate that faculty and students have different perceptions of the workloads assigned in courses.

Despite these real differences between the ratings of faculty and students, the overall pattern of relative ratings of the tasks by faculty and students are very similar. This suggests that faculty and students share similar conceptions of the tasks involved in law school courses and what is necessary for success. Both groups rated the same tasks as important in some respect, and the differences between the two are differences in degree of importance, not in whether certain tasks are important or not. Thus, the differences in ratings between the two groups probably don't have practical import for test validity or design.

The results of the MANOVAs are provided in Table 5. This table provides the *p*-values for the student/teacher comparison, the male/female comparison, and the first-year/upper-level comparison. Also provided in Table 5 are the η values that represent the 1-Λ values generated for the significance tests. These results supplement the observations regarding mean differences that are listed above.

TABLE 5
The MANOVA results for the 3 respondent groupings and the 14 task categories

	Number	Faculty vs. Students		Males vs. Females		1st Year vs. Upper Level	
Task Group	of tasks	*p*-value	η value	*p*-value	η value	*p*-value	η value
Managing Time	2	0.3272	0.001	0.1049	0.002	**0.0001**	0.034
Working as Part of a Group	2	0.2482	0.001	**0.0006**	0.005	**0.0001**	0.015
Constructing Arguments	4	**0.0001**	0.015	0.4547	0.002	**0.0001**	0.040
Listening	4	**0.0001**	0.020	0.0935	0.003	**0.0001**	0.036
Communicating Orally	4	**0.0001**	0.013	0.0062	0.005	**0.0001**	0.033
Organizing and Synthesizing	3	**0.0001**	0.019	**0.0032**	0.005	**0.0001**	0.098
Writing	10	**0.0001**	0.034	**0.0001**	0.031	**0.0001**	0.225
Reasoning	4	**0.0001**	0.031	0.2034	0.002	**0.0001**	0.104
Problem Solving	2	**0.0001**	0.006	0.4402	0.001	**0.0001**	0.040
Analyzing Cases or Legal Problems	7	**0.0001**	0.022	0.1832	0.004	**0.0001**	0.156
Normative Thinking	3	**0.0001**	0.031	**0.0029**	0.005	0.0846	0.002
Conducting Research	2	0.0379	0.002	0.2938	0.001	0.6632	0.001
Reading	5	**0.0001**	0.091	0.0333	0.004	**0.0001**	0.137
Quantitative Reasoning	5	**0.0001**	0.011	**0.0001**	0.010	**0.0001**	0.083

Note. Significant *p*-values are in bold print. Only *p*-values that are significant at the Bonferroni-adjusted value of .0036 are significant.

Of the 14 task categories, 11 show significant differences between student and faculty respondents. Only the Managing Time, Working as Part of a Group or Interpersonally, and Conducting Research categories did not show a difference between the students and faculty. However, these differences, while significant, are mostly not large in a practical sense. The effect sizes are very low—the largest significant value, .091, is for the Reading task category, while the smallest value, .006, is for the Problem Solving category. These η values are consistent with the conclusions drawn from the observations of the mean graphs in Figures 3a and 3b described above.

The results of the log-linear analyses are shown in Table 6. The χ^2 and *p*-values associated with the three data groupings are presented for each task category. For the eight task categories with nonsignificant values, the faculty and students are responding similarly as far as rating the tasks within a category. There are six significant χ^2 values for faculty vs. students task categories—Constructing Arguments, Communicating

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Orally, Organizing and Synthesizing, Writing, Reasoning, and Reading—with the largest values being for the Writing and Reading categories. This is entirely consistent with the observation above that students tended to rate concrete, practical reading and writing tasks higher than did faculty members, while also being consistent with the conclusion that there are no large overall differences between the faculty and students when it comes to rating tasks.

TABLE 6
The χ^2 test results for the 3 respondent groupings and 14 task categories

Task Group	Number of tasks	Faculty vs. Students		Males vs. Females		1st Year vs. Upper Level	
		χ^2	*p*-value	χ^2	*p*-value	χ^2	*p*-value
Managing Time	2	0.96	0.8120	0.45	0.9294	0.15	0.9854
Working as Part of a Group	2	3.30	0.3472	1.12	0.7720	11.98	0.0074
Constructing Arguments	4	**29.27**	**0.0006**	10.74	0.2942	**32.40**	**0.0002**
Listening	4	24.47	0.0036	11.81	0.2241	85.13	0.0000
Communicating Orally	4	**40.10**	**0.0000**	6.92	0.6450	**142.83**	**0.0000**
Organizing and Synthesizing	3	**46.81**	**0.0000**	3.53	0.7406	**30.69**	**0.0000**
Writing	10	**103.29**	**0.0000**	**84.97**	**0.0000**	**571.86**	**0.0000**
Reasoning	4	**29.59**	**0.0005**	11.86	0.2214	**53.78**	**0.0000**
Problem Solving	2	1.59	0.6610	3.48	0.3233	**88.73**	**0.0000**
Analyzing Cases or Legal Problems	7	34.60	0.0106	13.38	0.7685	**124.76**	**0.0000**
Normative Thinking	3	3.84	0.6989	6.73	0.3465	1.04	0.9839
Conducting Research	2	1.03	0.7947	1.63	0.6522	0.24	0.9709
Reading	5	**197.43**	**0.0000**	24.20	0.0191	**125.85**	**0.0000**
Quantitative Reasoning	5	10.06	0.6103	8.37	0.7555	**87.27**	**0.0000**

Note. Significant *p*-values are in bold print. Only *p*-values that are significant at the Bonferroni-adjusted value of .0012 are significant.

Question: Do men and women rate the importance of tasks for law school courses differently?

Faculty

Figures 4a and 4b compare the mean ratings of the importance of tasks by male and female faculty members. The dots represent the responses of male participants and the boxes represent those of female participants.

There are some differences in the mean ratings of the importance of tasks by male and female faculty. The mean ratings of female faculty are slightly higher for Managing Time, Working as Part of a Group or Interpersonally, Conducting Research, and for some Writing tasks. For example, male faculty rated writing exam questions as more important than female faculty did while female faculty rated drafting legal documents as more important than male faculty did. In addition, female faculty rated writing mechanics tasks, such as editing and using proper grammar, as slightly more important than male faculty did.

Other than these small differences, the ratings of the importance of tasks by male and female faculty members do not seem to differ much. It is possible that these small differences in ratings by male and female faculty members may be due to differences in the courses for which they responded. Figure 5 shows the proportion of males and female responding for each of the courses in the survey.

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FIGURE 4a. *Comparison of male and female faculty task mean ratings for the first 29 tasks (N = 455)*

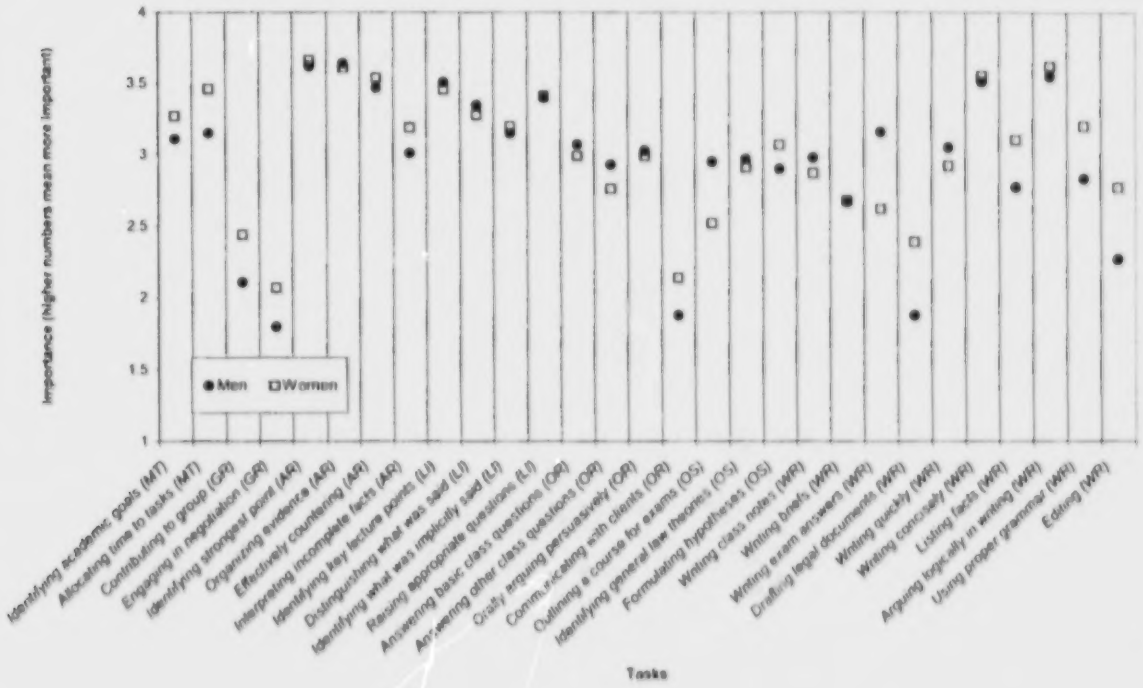

FIGURE 4b. *Comparison of male and female faculty task mean ratings for the last 28 tasks (N = 455)*

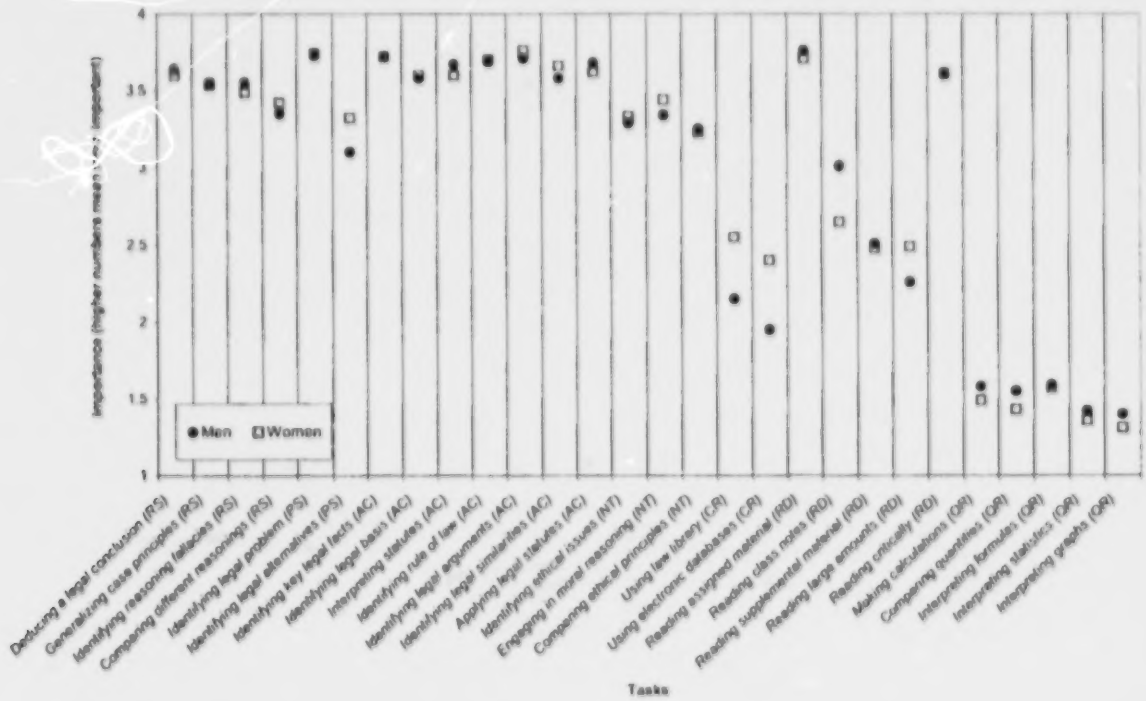

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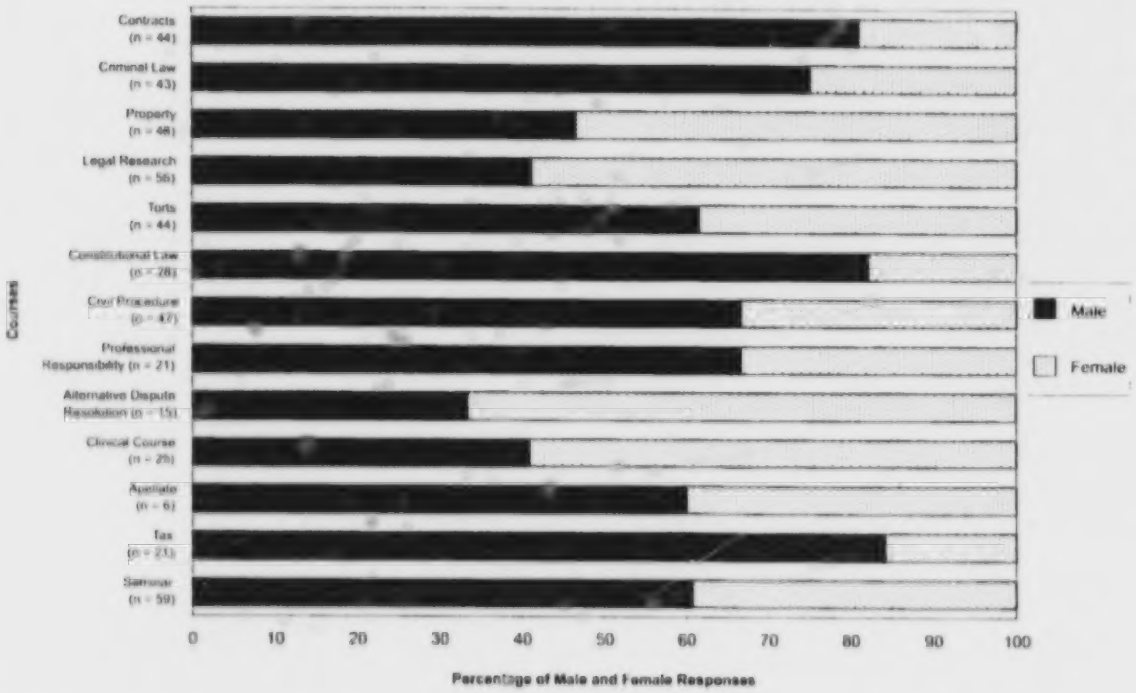
FIGURE 5. *Proportion of male and female faculty responding for each course surveyed (N = 457)*



Students

Figures 6a and 6b compare the mean ratings for male and female students. These mean ratings are virtually identical except for male students rating Quantitative Reasoning tasks as slightly more important than female students did. This difference may simply be due to the proportion of male versus female students responding for the Tax course.

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FIGURE 6a. *Comparison of male and female student task mean ratings for the first 29 tasks (N = 3,048)*

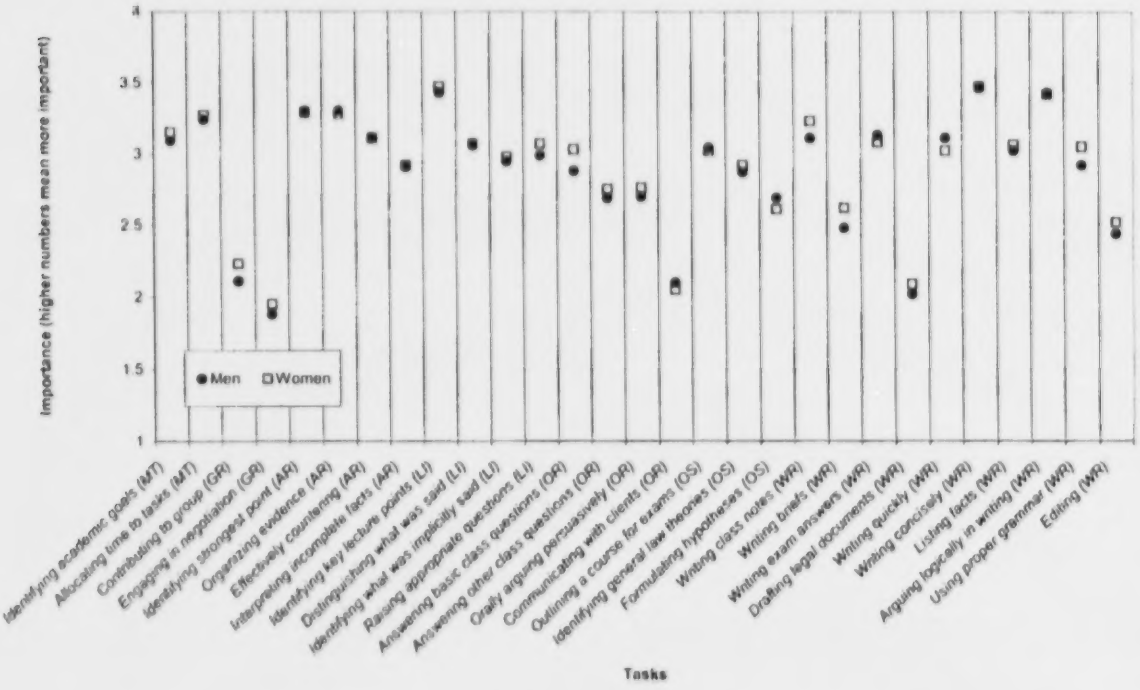
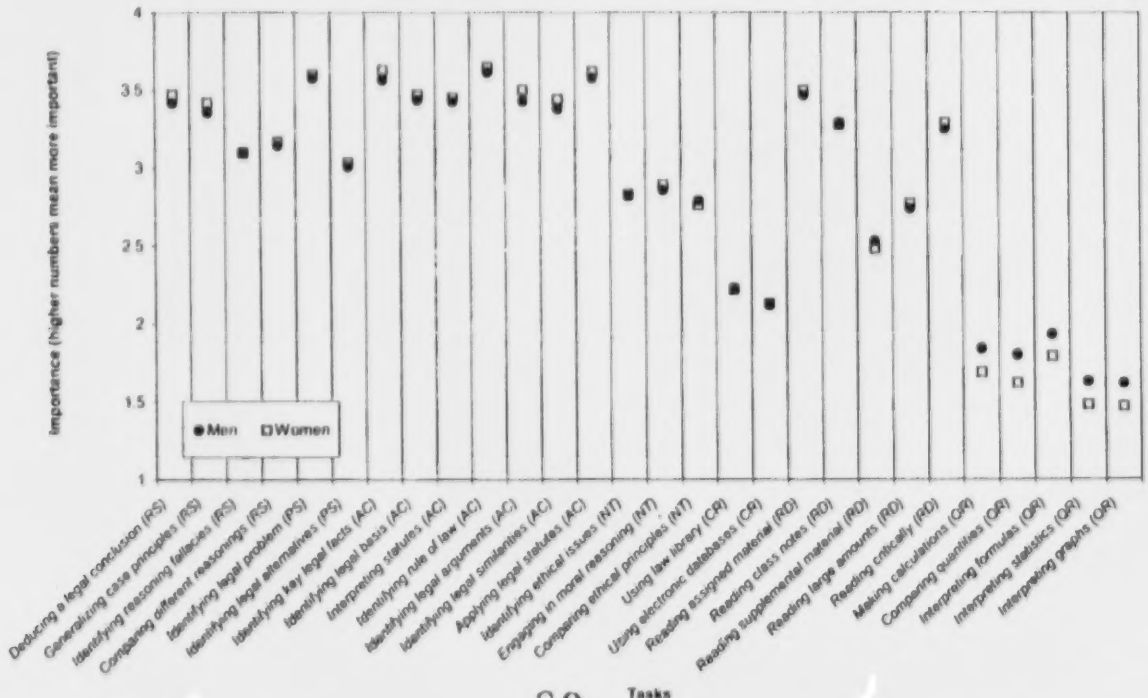


FIGURE 6b. *Comparison of male and female student task mean ratings for the last 28 tasks (N = 3,048)*



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All Respondents

The male-female MANOVA comparisons are provided in Table 5. There are few significant differences between male and female survey respondents in terms of how they rate the tasks in categories. Significant differences appear for the Writing and Quantitative Reasoning task categories, which is in line with conventional wisdom and the conclusions above. Significant differences also appear for the Working as Part of a Group or Interpersonally, Organizing and Synthesizing, and Normative Thinking task categories. However, the effect sizes for the significant differences are very small, ranging from .005 to .031, which indicates that these differences are probably significant only because of the large sample size.

Table 6 shows that there is only one significant χ^2 value—for the Writing task category—for males vs. females, indicating that male and female respondents tend to rate all of the tasks within the other 13 task categories similarly to one another. This may be related to the observation made above that male and female faculty members placed different weights on writing mechanics tasks. Overall, however, the data here appear even more convergent than for the faculty-student comparisons, and there do not appear to be any large differences in the way male and female respondents rated the tasks.

Question: Is there a difference in the task mean ratings between traditional first-year courses collectively and the upper-level courses collectively?

Figures 7a and 7b compare the mean ratings of the importance of tasks for traditional first-year courses collectively with those of the importance of tasks for the upper-level courses surveyed collectively. The dots indicate the responses for first-year courses and the boxes indicate the responses for upper-level courses. The responses for students and faculty were very comparable for this comparison and so were aggregated.

FIGURE 7a. *Comparison of task mean ratings for first-year courses collectively vs. upper-level courses collectively for the first 29 tasks (N = 3,520)*

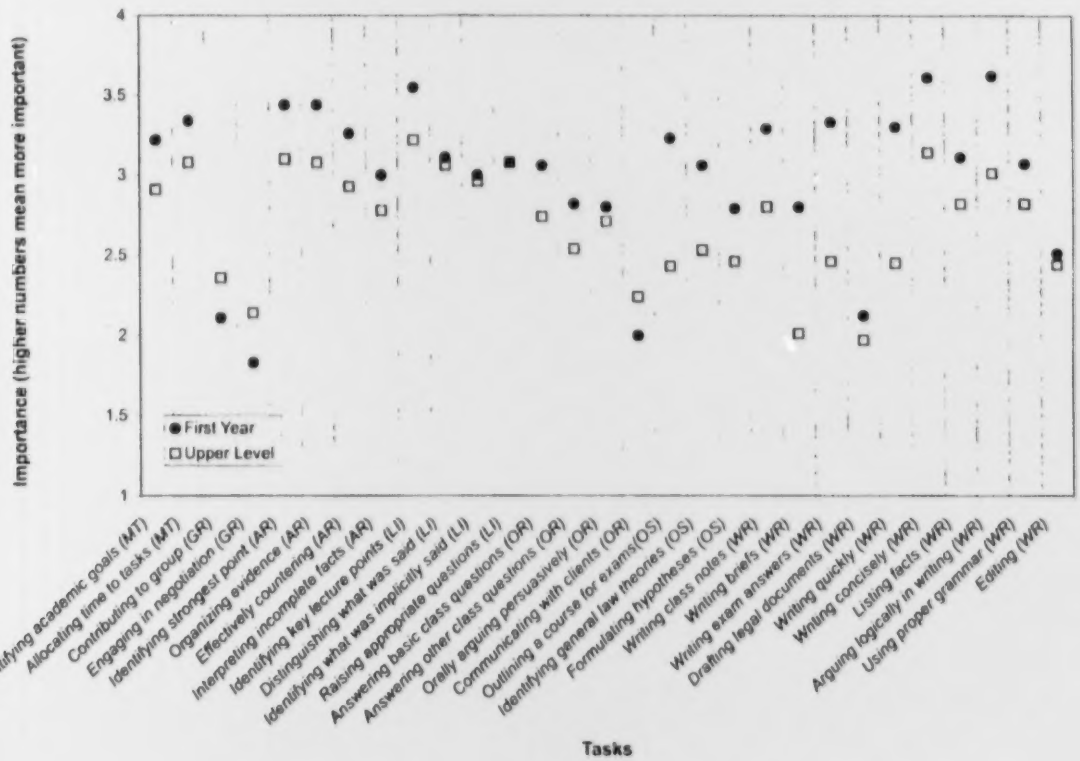

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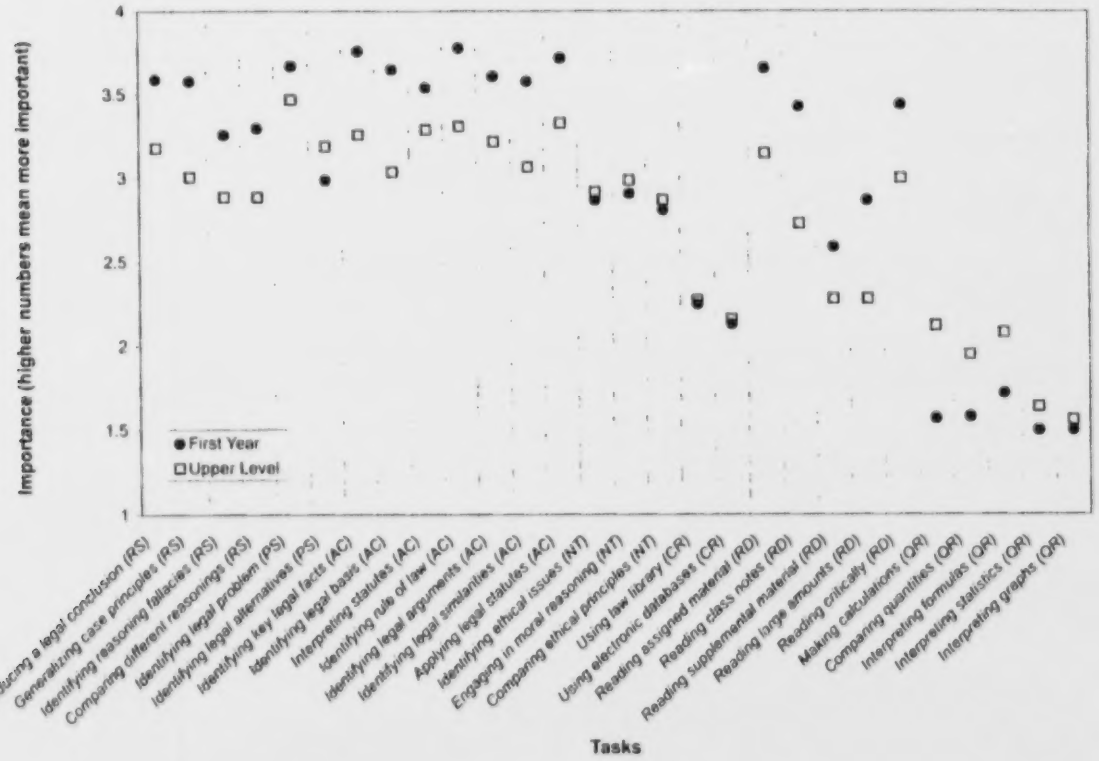
FIGURE 7b. *Comparison of task mean ratings for first-year courses collectively vs. upper-level courses collectively for the last 28 tasks (N = 3,520)*



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For the tasks in the Normative Thinking category, the Conducting Research category, and for three of the Listening tasks, there were no apparent differences between the mean ratings of their importance for traditional first-year courses and for the upper-level courses surveyed. The tasks in seven of the categories—Managing Time, Constructing Arguments, Organizing and Synthesizing, Writing, Reasoning, Analyzing Legal Cases, and Reading—were rated as more important for traditional first-year courses than for the upper-level courses surveyed. The tasks in two of the categories—Working as Part of a Group or Interpersonally and Quantitative Reasoning—were rated as more important for upper-level courses than for the traditional first-year courses. This is consistent with the nature of the upper-level courses selected for the survey, which included Clinical courses, Alternative Dispute Resolution, and Tax.

The ratings for tasks in the Communicating Orally and Problem Solving categories varied between being more important for the upper-level courses surveyed and for traditional first-year courses. For example, in the Communicating Orally category, the two tasks associated with answering questions had higher mean ratings of importance for traditional first-year courses than for upper-level courses. On the other hand, communicating orally with clients had a higher mean rating for the upper-level courses, which would include clinical courses. In the Listening category the rating of importance of identifying key lecture points was higher for first-year courses than for the upper-level courses surveyed, while there was no real difference between the ratings of the other three Listening tasks for the two levels of classes. This may suggest that there is more lecturing in traditional first-year courses than in the upper-level courses surveyed.

In general, many more of the tasks listed in the survey were rated as more important for traditional first-year courses than for upper-level courses. The differences between the ratings of tasks for the two levels of courses are greatest for Analyzing Cases or Legal Problems, Reading, Reasoning, Writing, Organizing and Synthesizing, and Constructing Arguments. In all these cases the tasks were rated higher for first-year classes. Classroom observations confirmed that these are the fundamental tasks in the first-year classes, while upper-level courses seemed to involve a greater variety of tasks. There was also a considerable difference in the ratings for the two levels for Quantitative Reasoning tasks, where the ratings were higher for upper-level courses. This seems to reflect the presence of the Tax course as one of the upper-level courses.

Even with these differences in ratings between the two levels, however, the ratings were convergent for the two levels of courses. Tasks that were rated as highly important for first-year courses were also rated highly important for upper-level courses and tasks not rated important for upper-level courses were also not rated as so important for first-year courses. In general, most of the tasks on the survey were rated more highly important for traditional first-year courses than for the upper-level courses surveyed. However, this may be because the upper-level courses surveyed were selected because they were taught differently from traditional first-year courses.

Table 5 shows that, as expected, there are many significant differences between the first-year and upper-level courses. Only two task categories, Normative Thinking and Conducting Research, do not show significant mean differences between course levels. The η values here are the largest of all the group comparisons, and five of them are larger than the .09 benchmark mentioned in the Data Analysis section above. These are the Organizing and Synthesizing tasks ($\eta = 0.98$), the Writing tasks ($\eta = 0.225$), the Reasoning tasks ($\eta = 0.104$), the Analyzing Cases or Legal Problems tasks ($\eta = 0.156$), and the Reading tasks ($\eta = 0.137$). The Writing, Communicating Orally, Reading, and Analyzing Cases or Legal Problems task categories also have the largest χ^2 values for the course-level comparisons, as can be seen in Table 6. This is consistent with the conclusions drawn above that tasks in these categories tend to be rated as more valuable in first-year courses overall.

It is worth noting that the Writing task category is statistically significant across the sex, teaching status, and course level groupings, and it has the highest effect size value and the highest χ^2 values of the 14 task groups for two of the three groupings. However, although there are differences for certain Writing tasks (such as writing briefs and summaries), the pattern of responses for the tasks remains consistent across the different respondent groupings. Tasks that are highly rated tend to be highly rated by all of the respondent groups.

Question: How do the ratings of importance of tasks differ between the individual courses surveyed?

First-year Courses

Figures 8a and 8b illustrate that the ratings of the importance of the 57 tasks were highly convergent for all of the traditional first-year courses surveyed except Legal Research and Writing. For the courses Contracts, Criminal Law, Property, Torts, Constitutional Law, and Civil Procedure the ratings are extremely close to each other. For Legal Research and Writing most of the Writing tasks, Working as Part of a Group or Interpersonally tasks, Constructing Arguments tasks, and Conducting Research tasks were rated as more important than for the other traditional first-year classes. In contrast, Listening tasks, Organizing and Synthesizing tasks, most Communicating Orally tasks, and writing exams were rated as less important for Legal Research and Writing. These results correspond with classroom observations of how traditional first-year courses are taught. Most traditional first-year courses are taught very similarly, organized around cases and using predominantly some combination of lecture and the Socratic method. Hence, they tend to involve the same tasks. Legal Research and Writing is organized and taught quite differently, with an emphasis on acquiring skills in legal analysis and communicating effectively in writing. So the similarity of ratings among most traditional first-year courses and the differences in ratings of tasks for Legal Research and Writing are what would be expected.

FIGURE 8a. *Comparison of task mean ratings for all respondents for traditional first-year courses for the first 29 tasks (N = 3,525)*

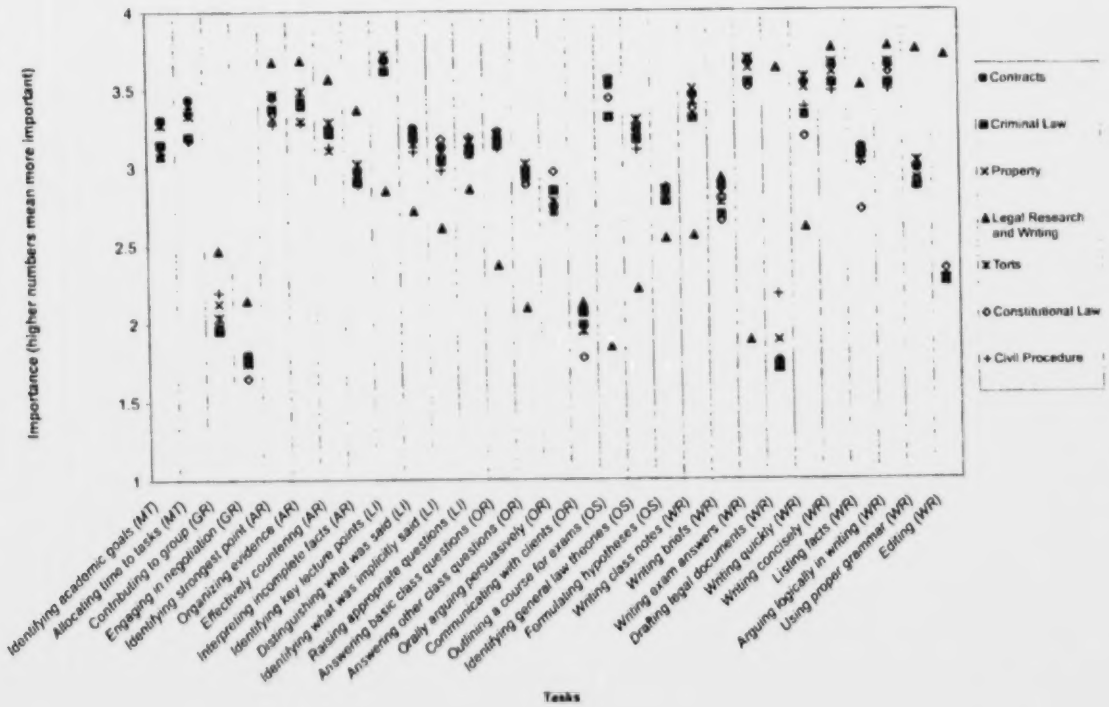

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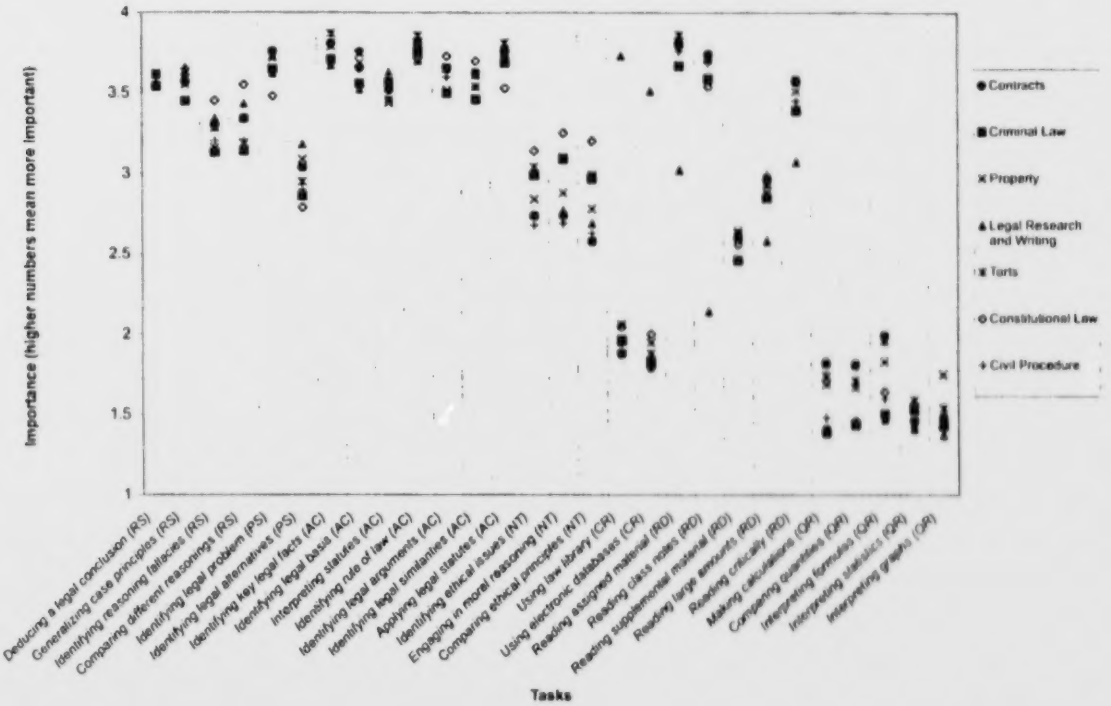
FIGURE 8b. *Comparison of task mean ratings for all respondents for traditional first-year courses for the last 28 tasks (N = 3,525)*



Upper-level Courses

Unlike traditional first-year courses, the upper-level courses do not show a convergent pattern of ratings of importance of tasks. For that reason the results are being displayed in tabular format, rather than as a graph, in Tables 7a and 7b. While the sample sizes for some of the courses are not very large, the table does offer some interesting insights. As one might expect, in the Professional Responsibility course, Normative Thinking tasks were rated as most important and Quantitative Reasoning tasks as least important. After Normative Thinking tasks, Problem Solving, Analyzing Cases or Legal Problems, Reasoning, and Reading were generally rated as most important. In contrast, respondents for the Tax course rated several of the Quantitative Reasoning tasks high and the Normative Thinking tasks lowest of any of the courses. However, respondents for the Tax course also rated Analyzing Cases or Legal Problems, Reading, and some Reasoning and Listening tasks high and rated Conducting Research, Working as Part of a Group or Interpersonally, and some Communicating Orally tasks very low.

Respondents for Alternative Dispute Resolution courses rated Working as Part of a Group or Interpersonally and Listening tasks high and Analyzing Cases or Legal Problems, Quantitative Reasoning, and Reasoning tasks lower than most of the other courses. In contrast to all the other upper-level courses, respondents for the Clinical and Appellate courses rated Conducting Research tasks high. For the Clinical course nearly all the tasks were rated as quite important except for Quantitative Reasoning tasks and those, like reading class notes, outlining a course, and answering exam questions, that are more important in a traditional class structure. Reading tasks were also not rated as high as for traditional first-year courses. Respondents for the Appellate course rated Constructing Argument tasks most important, followed by Analyzing Cases or Legal Problems, Reasoning, Problem Solving, and some of the Reading and Writing tasks. They rated Quantitative Reasoning tasks lowest and, aside from orally arguing persuasively, did not rate Communicating Orally tasks as high. Listening tasks were also not rated as high as for other courses. All the tasks were generally not rated as high for the Seminar courses as for other courses. Rated highest were Constructing Argument tasks, Analyzing Cases or Legal Problems tasks, Problem Solving tasks, Normative Thinking tasks, and Listening tasks.

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TABLE 7a

Task mean ratings for all respondents for upper-level courses for the first 29 tasks

Tasks	Professional Responsibility	Alternative Dispute Resolution	Clinical Course	Apellate	Tax	Other Seminar
Managing Time						
Identifying academic goals	2.76	2.63	3.02	3.00	2.96	2.99
Allocating time to tasks	2.74	2.82	3.63	3.33	3.04	3.09
Working as Part of a Group						
Contributing to group	2.20	3.65	2.65	2.27	1.86	2.23
Engaging in negotiation	1.81	3.94	3.28	1.82	1.37	1.90
Constructing Arguments						
Identifying strongest point	3.01	3.08	3.65	3.87	2.59	3.36
Organizing evidence	3.08	3.05	3.71	3.86	2.55	3.30
Effectively countering	2.92	2.95	3.53	3.81	2.34	3.18
Interpreting incomplete facts	2.65	2.74	3.41	3.56	2.29	3.01
Listening						
Identifying key lecture points	3.36	3.19	2.66	2.18	3.51	3.35
Distinguishing what was said	2.89	3.29	3.41	2.56	2.94	3.18
Identifying what was implicitly said	2.80	3.42	3.45	2.52	2.66	3.11
Raising appropriate questions	3.05	3.46	3.62	3.13	2.64	3.22
Communicating Orally						
Answering basic class questions	2.90	2.83	2.38	1.93	2.87	2.86
Answering other class questions	2.83	2.74	2.23	1.93	2.56	2.62
Orally arguing persuasively	2.75	2.93	3.35	3.85	2.08	2.78
Communicating with clients	2.13	3.02	3.67	1.71	1.84	2.00
Organizing and Synthesizing						
Outlining a course for exams	2.56	1.46	1.38	1.55	3.24	2.54
Identifying general law theories	2.78	2.09	2.17	2.35	2.63	2.73
Formulating hypotheses	2.43	2.19	2.66	2.79	2.25	2.70
Writing						
Writing class notes	2.87	2.29	1.88	2.04	3.47	2.77
Writing briefs	1.89	1.49	2.57	2.88	1.88	2.01
Writing exam answers	2.64	1.62	1.28	1.40	3.35	2.51
Drafting legal documents	1.53	1.61	3.65	3.82	1.40	1.84
Writing quickly	2.21	1.65	2.84	2.29	2.68	2.60
Writing concisely	2.84	2.72	3.61	3.71	3.06	3.22
Listing facts	2.64	2.58	3.60	3.48	2.56	2.87
Arguing logically in writing	2.96	2.63	3.57	3.82	2.67	3.20
Using proper grammar	2.68	2.90	3.69	3.81	2.19	3.00
Editing	2.32	2.54	3.54	3.74	1.76	2.46

TABLE 7b
Task mean ratings for all respondents for upper-level courses for the last 28 tasks

Tasks	Professional Responsibility	Alternative Dispute Resolution	Clinical Course	Apellate	Tax	Other Seminar
Reasoning						
Deducing a legal conclusion	3.34	2.31	3.45	3.60	3.37	3.15
Generalizing case principles	3.04	2.15	3.48	3.67	3.01	3.06
Identifying reasoning fallacies	2.86	2.54	3.46	3.49	2.60	3.06
Comparing different reasonings	2.87	2.69	3.33	3.58	2.61	3.01
Problem Solving						
Identifying legal problem	3.45	3.15	3.82	3.62	3.46	3.51
Identifying legal alternatives	3.01	3.68	3.80	3.18	2.84	3.20
Analyzing Cases or Legal Problems						
Identifying key legal facts	3.07	2.64	3.87	3.68	3.21	3.37
Identifying legal basis	2.96	2.13	3.48	3.73	3.08	3.13
Interpreting statutes	3.22	2.13	3.80	3.74	3.64	3.19
Identifying rule of law	3.37	2.21	3.69	3.69	3.58	3.31
Identifying legal arguments	3.09	2.97	3.78	3.76	2.97	3.33
Identifying legal similarities	3.01	2.37	3.66	3.72	3.01	3.14
Applying legal statutes	3.43	2.34	3.68	3.68	3.57	3.30
Normative Thinking						
Identifying ethical issues	3.66	3.10	3.32	2.93	2.34	3.13
Engaging in moral reasoning	3.75	3.16	3.34	3.07	2.40	3.24
Comparing ethical principles	3.68	3.12	3.16	2.95	2.23	3.14
Conducting Research						
Using law library	2.02	2.17	3.52	3.82	1.53	2.41
Using electronic databases	1.92	2.10	3.32	3.85	1.41	2.27
Reading						
Reading assigned material	3.31	3.03	2.50	2.69	3.33	3.32
Reading class notes	2.93	1.74	1.45	1.87	3.74	2.66
Reading supplemental material	2.13	2.03	2.34	2.79	2.18	2.43
Reading large amounts	2.30	1.63	2.16	2.89	2.35	2.41
Reading critically	3.06	2.70	3.08	2.89	3.07	3.07
Quantitative Reasoning						
Making calculations	1.40	1.73	1.64	1.38	3.31	1.50
Comparing quantities	1.38	1.69	1.56	1.36	2.83	1.49
Interpreting formulas	1.35	1.52	1.60	1.35	3.35	1.43
Interpreting statistics	1.33	1.57	1.48	1.41	1.97	1.50
Interpreting graphs	1.32	1.54	1.40	1.40	1.82	1.44

While there is no convergent pattern of the ratings of the importance of tasks across all upper-level courses, the differences among the courses make a great deal of sense when the subject matter and teaching methods of these courses are taken into account. And, while there are variations in which tasks are more important in which classes, the tasks that are rated as most highly important for the aggregate of courses also stand out as important for most of the upper-level courses. Where the upper-level courses differ is that for some courses, like Tax and Alternative Dispute Resolution, some tasks stand out as important that are not rated so important in most other courses. The upper-level courses in the survey were chosen because they are likely to differ from traditional first-year courses in subject matter and teaching methods. In the light of this, it is noteworthy that many of the tasks generally rated as highly important for all law school courses were also rated as highly important for these upper-level courses.

Question: Do the ratings of importance of tasks for success in law school courses differ by race, ethnicity, primary language, or undergraduate major of students?

Figures 9a and 9b compare the ratings of the importance of the tasks by respondents of different ethnicities—Native Americans, Asian Americans, African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Caucasians, and Other. There were relatively few respondents from some of these groups, so the results must be interpreted cautiously. While members of some ethnic groups rated all the tasks higher or lower than the members of other groups did, the pattern of responses was highly similar for all of the groups. The ratings by members of the Hispanic and Native American groups diverged the most from those of members of the other groups. However, the differences between the groups are small and the responses for all the groups strongly converge into the same pattern of relative significance.

FIGURE 9a. *Comparison of task mean ratings by ethnic group for the first 29 tasks (N = 3,525)*

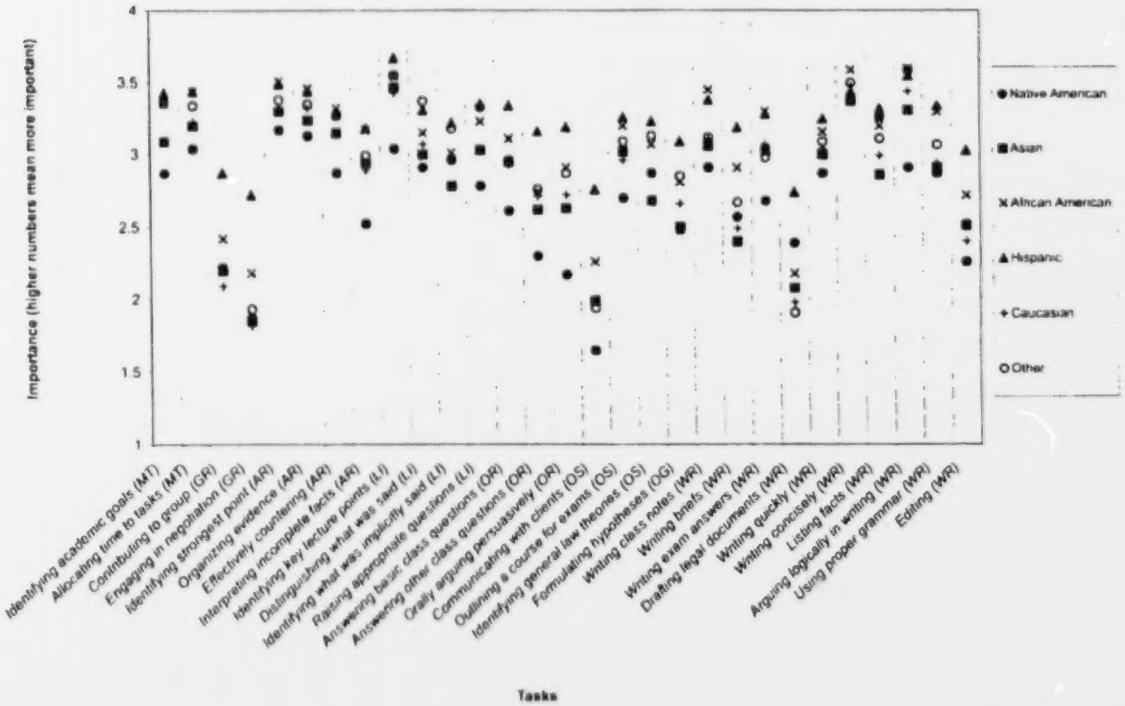

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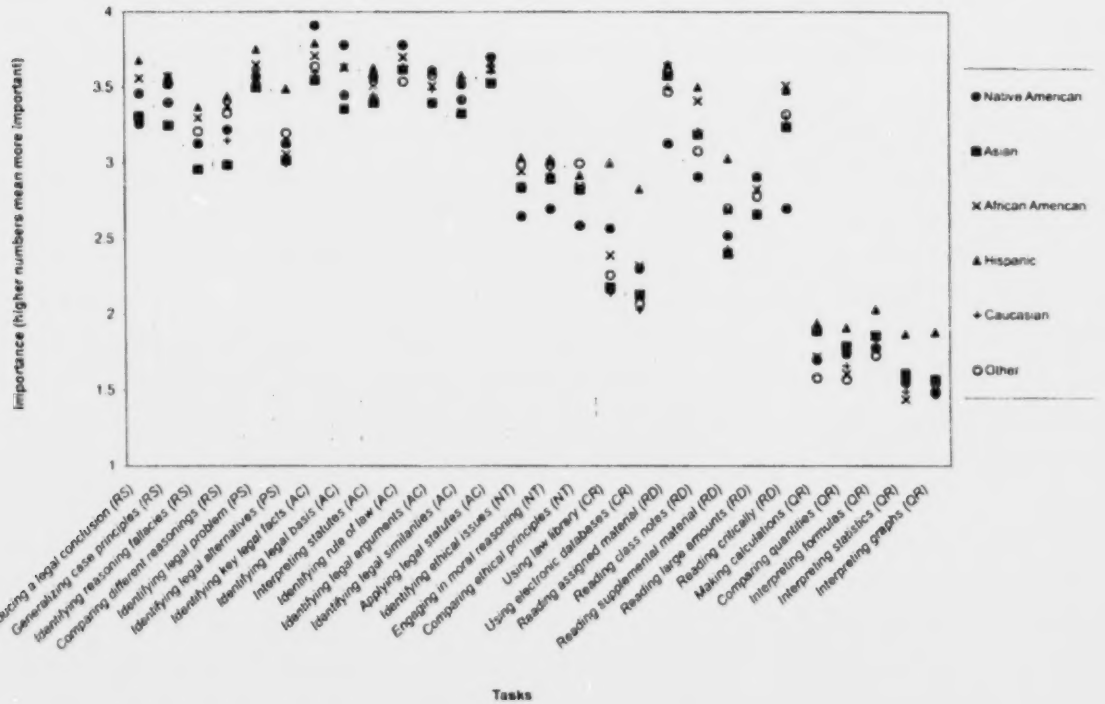
FIGURE 9b. *Comparison of task mean ratings by ethnic group for the last 28 tasks (N = 3,525)*



A comparison was also made between the ratings of importance of tasks by respondents for whom English is not the primary language with those by respondents for whom English is the primary language, although that data is not presented. While those for whom English is not the primary language generally rated all tasks as more important than those for whom English is the primary language, there was no difference in the pattern of relative ratings for tasks.

The self-reported undergraduate majors of students were categorized into seven groups: the arts, natural sciences and mathematics, technical, business-related, professional/education, humanities, and social sciences. There were essentially no differences in the importance ratings of tasks between these groups of respondents, so that data is also not presented.

Question: To what extent does the list of tasks surveyed include all the tasks involved in success in the law school course surveyed?

Question 5 on the survey asked respondents how exhaustive the list of 57 tasks was of the tasks involved in success in the course. The possible answers are: "include essentially all the tasks involved in success in the course," "include most of the tasks involved in success in the course but do not include some other tasks involved in success in the course," "include some of the tasks involved in success in the course but do not include many other tasks involved in success in the course," and "include few, if any, of the tasks involved in success in the course." In Figure 10 the bars represent the responses of female faculty, male faculty, female students, and male students. The different shaded sections of each bar represent the percentage of respondents giving each answer. In all four cases, over 50% of the respondents indicated that the list of tasks includes essentially all the tasks necessary for success in the course. In fact, over 80% of participants responded with either "includes essentially all the tasks ..." or "includes most of the tasks." This indicates that by far most respondents regarded the list of tasks as very exhaustive of the tasks involved in success in the course.

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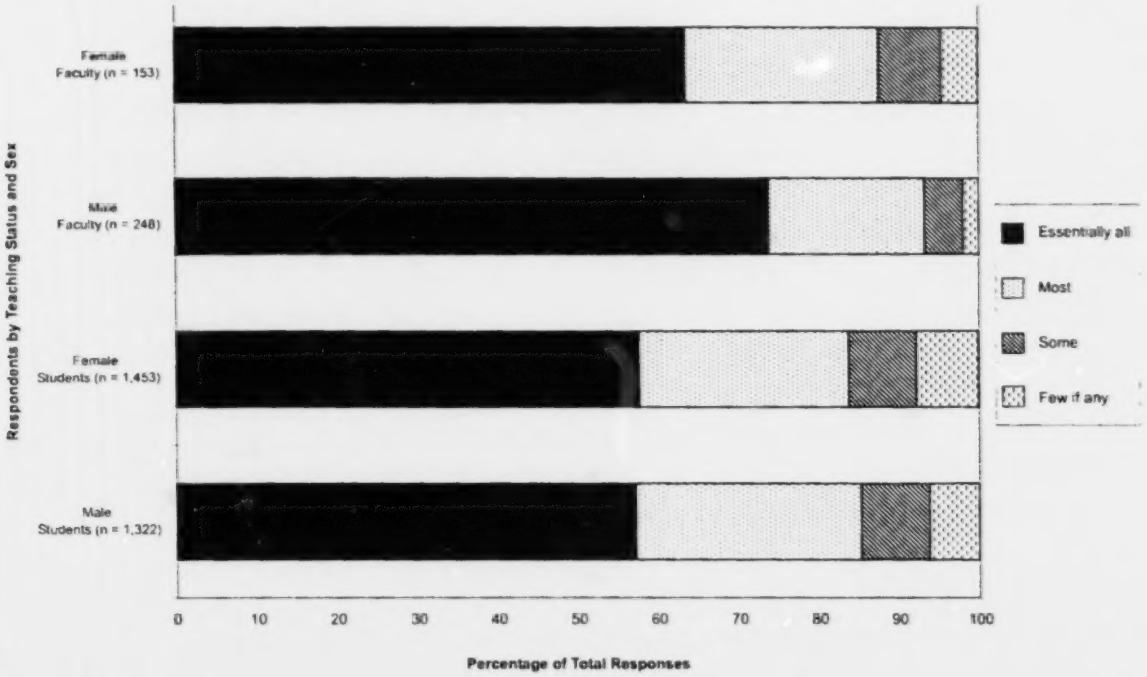
FIGURE 10. *Proportion of responses by male and female faculty and students to the question of how complete the list of tasks is (N = 3,176)*



There were, though, some differences in the responses to Question 5 between faculty and students and between male and female faculty members. In general faculty members considered the list to be more exhaustive than students did. The responses of male and female students are strikingly similar to each other. However, over 70% of male faculty members considered the list to include essentially all the tasks required for the course while just over 60% of the female faculty did. Over 90% of the male faculty responded either "includes essentially all the tasks ..." or "includes most of the tasks" compared to just under 90% of the female faculty. Nevertheless, the list was regarded as highly inclusive by nearly all (80%) of the respondents, which suggests that it can be regarded as a reasonably comprehensive list of the tasks important to success in the law school courses surveyed.

Were the responses to the question of how exhaustive the list of tasks is different for different courses? In Figure 11 the bars represent either law school levels (i.e., first-year or upper-level) or individual courses. Bars 1 and 9 represent the two levels. Bars 2–8 represent first-year courses and bars 10–15 represent upper-level courses. The differently shaded sections of the bars represent the percentage of respondents giving each answer. A higher percentage of respondents judged the list of tasks to contain essentially all the tasks involved in success in traditional first-year courses than judged the list to contain essentially all the tasks involved in success in upper-level courses. Around 60% of the respondents for traditional first-year courses judged the list of tasks to contain essentially all the tasks involved in success in the course, compared to around 50% of the respondents for upper-level courses. The percentage responding "contains essentially all" did not vary much from 60% for any of the first-year courses individually. The percentages answering "contains essentially all" for the upper-level courses were all below 50% except for Tax. For Professional Responsibility, Alternative Dispute Resolution, and a Clinical course, the percentages were closer to 40%. When the percentage of respondents answering "contains most of the tasks" are added to the percentage answering "essentially all", the responses for first-year courses fall between 85% and 90%. The percentage giving these answers for upper-level courses is both lower and more variable. For upper-level courses taken together, the percentage is just under 80% and it ranges from 80% for a Clinical course, Tax, and a Seminar to under 70% for Alternative Dispute Resolution.

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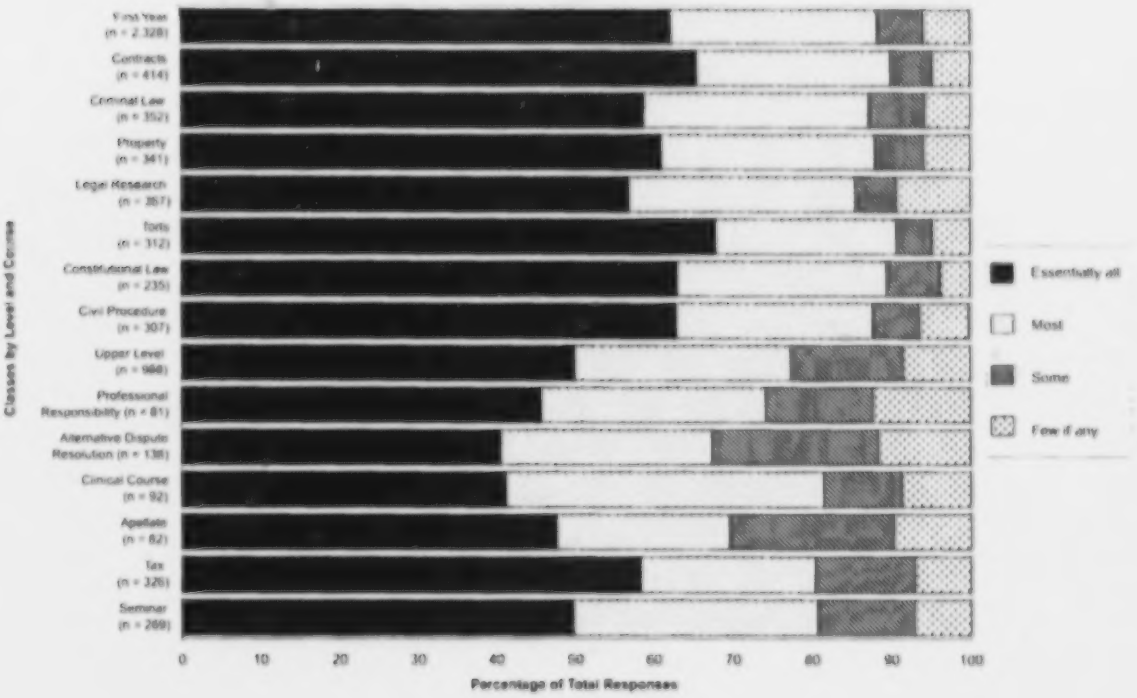
FIGURE 11. *Proportion of responses for each course to the question of how complete the list of tasks is (N = 3,316)*



Thus, the list of tasks in question 4 was considered very comprehensive and complete for traditional first-year courses and somewhat less so for upper-level courses. However, even in the case of upper-level courses selected as likely to be taught differently from the ways traditional first-year courses are taught, the percentage of respondents answering that the list of tasks contains essentially all or most of the tasks involved in success in the course is very high. This would seem to indicate that the list includes most of the tasks involved in most law school courses at the schools surveyed, both in traditional first-year courses and upper-level courses. And this suggests that the list of tasks in the survey provides a good basis for determining what skills are essential for success in law school.

Since some respondents indicated that the list of tasks in question 4 did not include essentially all the tasks involved in success in the course, question 6 on the survey offered respondents the opportunity to offer additional tasks not mentioned in question 4. Of the respondents, 664 (19%) gave a response to this question. Many of the respondents simply repeated tasks mentioned in question 4, such as listening, writing, public speaking, organization, time management, research, and problem solving. However, some different tasks were also mentioned. Most widely mentioned across courses was memorization. Also mentioned by respondents for several courses were tasks related to study groups and preparation for examinations. And for several courses, most notably Alternative Dispute Resolution and Clinical, personal communication and negotiation tasks were mentioned.

Question: Do the tasks involved in success in law school courses vary according to how the courses are taught?

How Were the Courses Surveyed Taught?

Discussions with law school faculty and students and observation of law school classes suggest that courses may be taught in different ways. The "traditional" method for teaching a law school course is case study and the use of the Socratic method in class, with students responding to faculty questions about cases. In practice, the Socratic method is often supplemented by a certain amount of lecturing. However, other teaching methods are also employed. Many courses use a problem solving method in which a hypothetical

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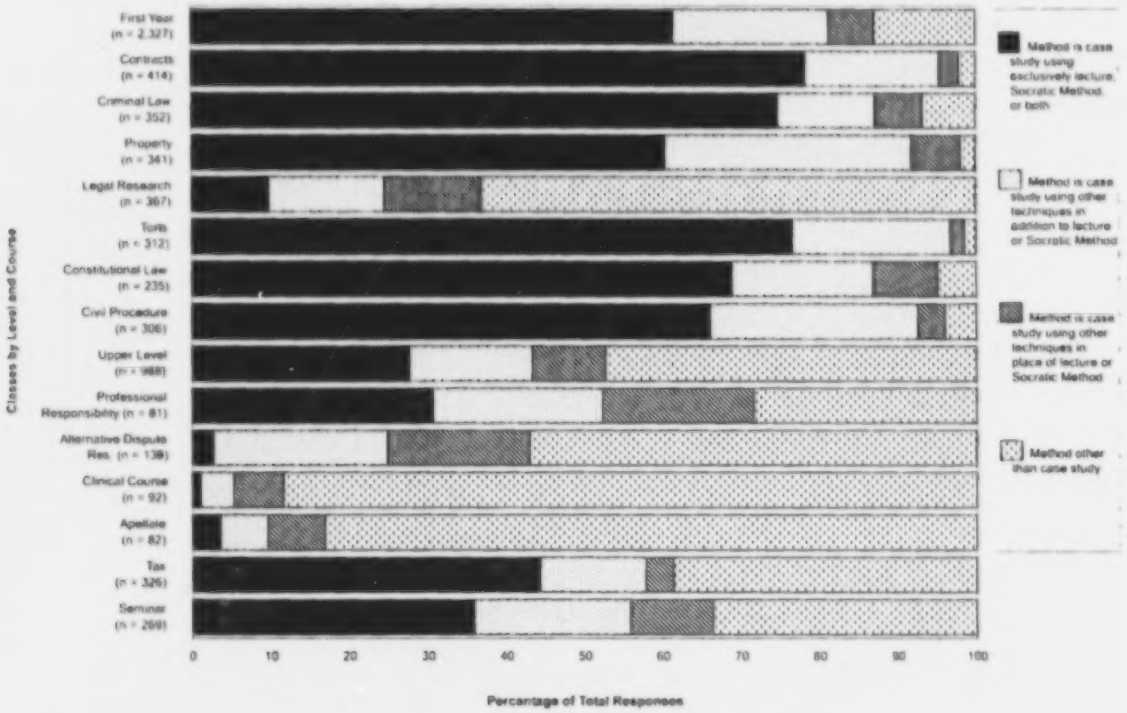
legal problem is posed and students have to work out a solution, given the law as they understand it. Other methods include role-playing, seminars, clinical work, and group projects.

To answer the question of how the tasks involved in success in law school are affected by the way courses are taught, we first asked how the courses being surveyed were taught. Because of the historical dominance of the case study/Socratic method approach to teaching law school courses, the crucial difference in teaching methods was seen to be between this traditional method and all other methods together. For that reason, the survey asked in Question 2 which of the responses "best describes the teaching techniques or methods used in the course" and the responses were: (1) "Case study using exclusively lecture, the Socratic Method, or a combination of the two," (2) "Case study using other techniques or methods (e.g., small group exercises) in addition to lecture or the Socratic Method," (3) "Case study not using lecture or the Socratic Method but instead using other techniques or methods (e.g., group exercises, open discussion)," and (4) "A teaching approach other than case study (e.g., historical survey, Problem Solving, focus on certain academic or legal skills, clinical practice)."

Figure 12 is a bar graph giving the proportion of respondents indicating that a particular teaching method was used for a particular course or for first-year and upper-level courses taken together. Bars 1 and 9 represent the two course levels. Bars 2–8 represent first-year courses and bars 10–15 represent upper-level courses. The differently shaded sections of each bar on the graph indicate the percentage of respondents giving each response.

FIGURE 12. *Proportion of teaching methods used in each course (N = 3,315)*


First Year (n = 2,327)
Contracts (n = 414)
Criminal Law (n = 352)
Property (n = 341)
Legal Research (n = 367)
Torts (n = 312)
Constitutional Law (n = 235)
Civil Procedure (n = 306)
Upper Level (n = 988)
Professional Responsibility (n = 81)
Alternative Dispute Res. (n = 139)
Clinical Course (n = 92)
Apellate (n = 82)
Tax (n = 326)
Seminar (n = 269)
Classes by Level and Course
0
10
20
30
40
50
60
70
80
90
100
Percentage of Total Responses
Method is case study using exclusively lecture, Socratic Method, or both
Method is case study using other techniques in addition to lecture or Socratic Method
Method is case study using other techniques in place of lecture or Socratic Method
Method other than case study

All the traditional first-year courses but one were described as predominantly taught using case study with lecture or the Socratic Method or both. The only exception to this predominant response pattern is Legal Research and Writing, for which over 60% of the responses indicate some method other than case study being used and over 75% indicate some techniques other than lecture or Socratic Method. As a result, over 60% of the responses for all of the courses identified as traditional first-year courses (top-most bar) indicate case study with lecture and the Socratic Method exclusively and over 80% indicate case study with lecture and the Socratic Method either exclusively or in conjunction with other methods or techniques. These results would seem to indicate that case study and the use of lecture and/or the Socratic Method are the predominant ways of teaching the traditional first-year courses in law school.

This contrasts with the results for the upper-level courses surveyed. For the upper-level courses taken together (bar labeled "upper level"), less than 30% of the responses indicated that case study with lecture

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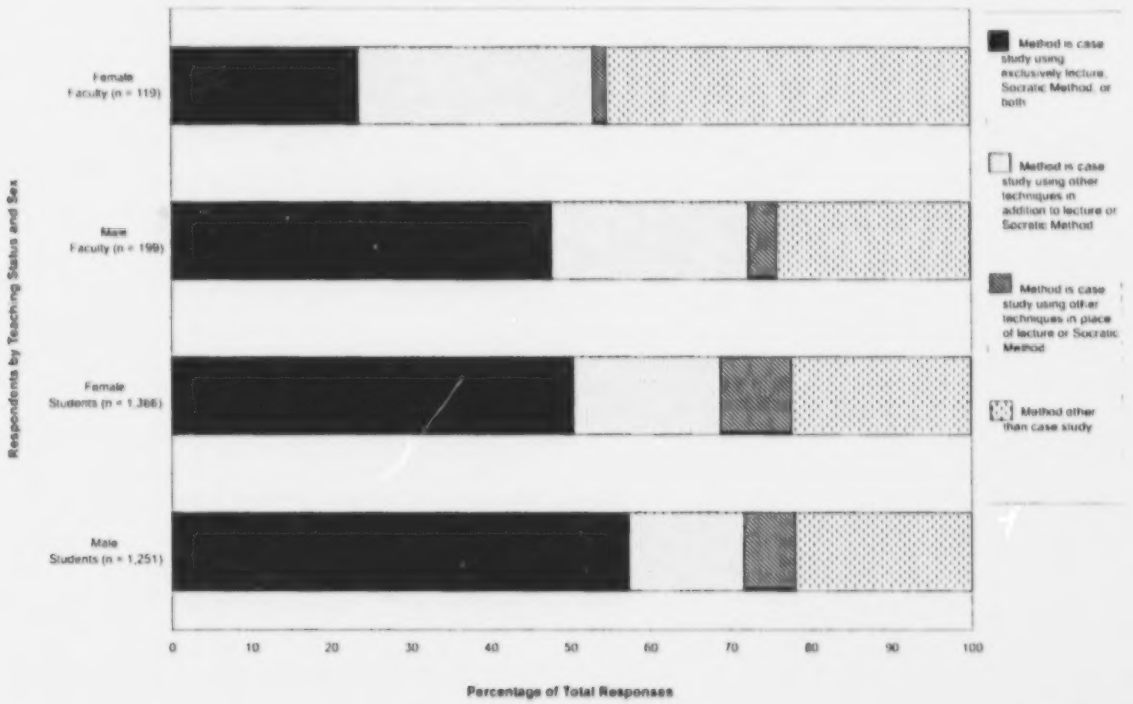
and the Socratic Method was used exclusively. These methods were indicated predominantly for three courses, Tax, a Seminar, and Professional Responsibility, ranging from around 30% for Professional Responsibility to around 45% for Tax. For Alternative Dispute Resolution, Clinical courses, and Appellate courses, less than 5% indicated this teaching method. Between 80% and 90% of the respondents for both the Clinical courses and the Appellate courses indicated some other method than case study and over 50% of the respondents for Alternative Dispute Resolution indicated a method other than case study. These responses are not surprising, however, since the upper-level courses surveyed were chosen because they were judged likely to use techniques other than those used in traditional first-year or core courses. As expected, the results indicate that indeed some upper-level courses are primarily taught using techniques other than case study with lecture and the Socratic Method.

The comparison of responses by faculty and students and by males and females regarding methods and techniques shows a clear difference between the responses of male and female faculty about the teaching methods or techniques they use (Figure 13). Over 70% of the male faculty indicated that they used case study with lecture and Socratic Method either exclusively or in conjunction with other methods. However, only between 50% and 55% of the female faculty gave this response. Indeed, less than 25% of the female faculty indicated that they used case study with lecture and Socratic Method exclusively while nearly 50% of the male faculty indicated that they did. Further, more than 45% of the female faculty indicated that they used some other method than case study, while less than 25% of the male faculty did. Figure 5 indicates that there is a difference in which courses male and female faculty responded to the survey for and this difference may partially account for the difference in teaching methods used.

FIGURE 13. *Proportion of teaching methods reported by male and female faculty and students (N = 2,935)*


Female Faculty (n = 119)
Male Faculty (n = 199)
Female Students (n = 1,366)
Male Students (n = 1,251)
Respondents by Teaching Status and Sex
0
10
20
30
40
50
60
70
80
90
100
Percentage of Total Responses
Method is case study using exclusively lecture, Socratic Method, or both
Method is case study using other techniques in addition to lecture or Socratic Method
Method is case study using other techniques in place of lecture or Socratic Method
Method other than case study

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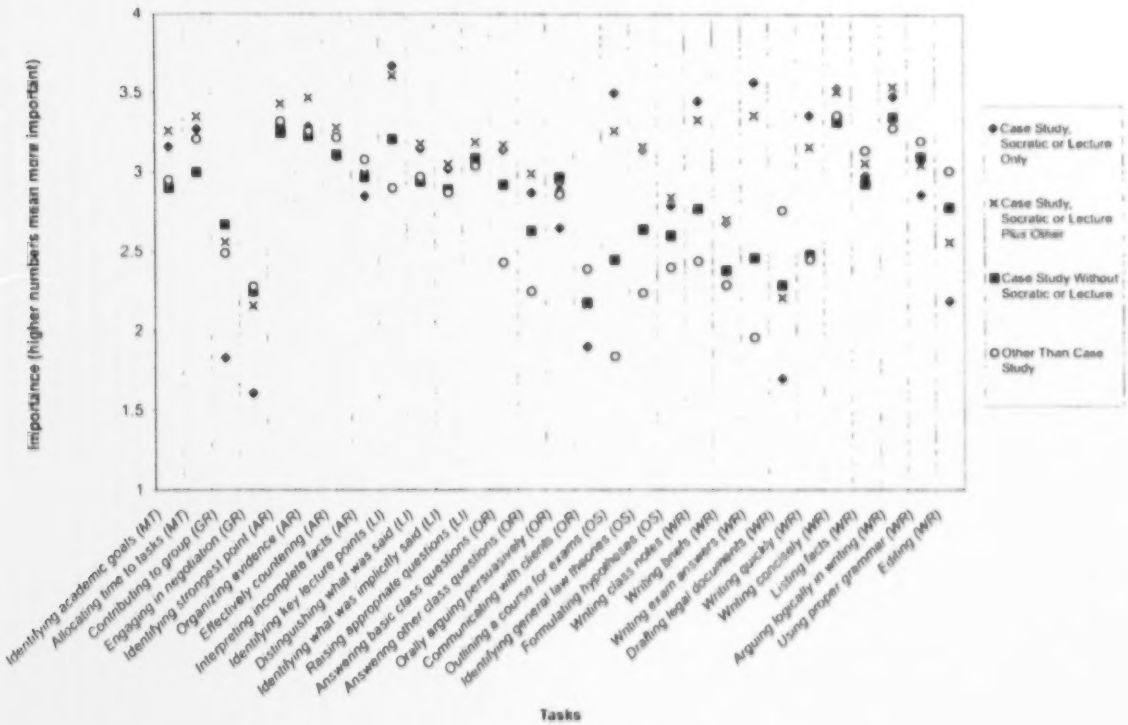
Male and female students, on the other hand, gave very similar responses regarding the teaching methods and techniques used in courses.

Question 3 asked respondents to briefly describe any teaching techniques or methods used in the course other than lecture or Socratic Method or case study. This question was addressed by 1,610 respondents. Methods most commonly mentioned were group exercises, student presentations, problem solving, use of hypotheticals, open discussion, debate, and writing. For some courses—particularly Alternative Dispute Resolution—role-playing was mentioned. For a few courses, working with clients was mentioned. Some specific courses also mentioned use of films and videos. It is noteworthy that many of these methods involve categories of tasks and skills not ranked so high in Question 4—Working as Part of a Group or Interpersonally and Communicating Orally.

How Are the Task Ratings Related to Methods of Teaching?

Figures 14a and 14b compare the task means for courses using each of the four teaching methods mentioned in the survey. For the tasks associated with Managing Time, Constructing Arguments, Problem Solving, and Quantitative Reasoning, there was no apparent pattern of difference in the ratings for different methods of teaching. Managing Time seems to be rated moderately important for all the teaching methods. Tasks involved in Constructing Arguments and Problem Solving were rated as important for all the methods of teaching. In contrast, tasks involving Quantitative Reasoning were rated as not very important.

FIGURE 14a. *Comparison of task means for all respondents by teaching method for the first 29 tasks (N = 3,525)*



Tasks in the categories Reasoning, Analyzing Cases or Legal Problems, Listening, Organizing and Synthesizing, and some of the Writing tasks were rated as somewhat more important for courses involving lecture and the Socratic Method either exclusively or with other methods added. The differences were not great, however, and the Reasoning and Analyzing Cases or Legal Problems tasks were rated as quite important for all methods of teaching. Listening and Organizing and Synthesizing were rated as somewhat less important for all methods. The category of tasks with the biggest difference between those courses including lecture and the Socratic Method and those not, was Organizing and Synthesizing.

The Communicating Orally tasks involving answering questions in class were rated as more highly important in case study courses than in courses not using case study, whereas arguing persuasively was

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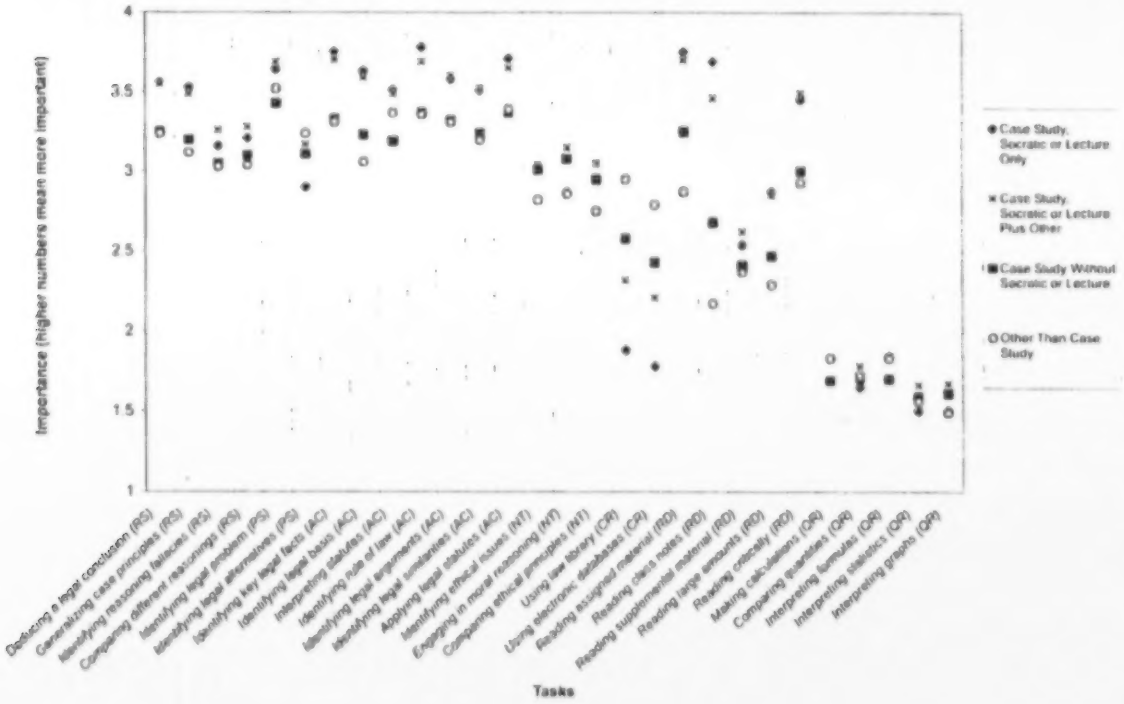
rated at about the same importance for courses using all the methods. Communicating orally with a client was rated higher for course methods other than case study, indicating its relation to clinical courses. However, none of the Communicating Orally tasks except answering class questions was rated as highly important for any of the methods.

FIGURE 14b. *Comparison of task means for all respondents by teacing method for the last 28 tasks (N = 3,525)*



Many of the Writing tasks were rated as quite important for all teaching methods, particularly arguing logically and writing concisely.

Conducting Research tasks were least important for courses using case study with lecture and the Socratic Method exclusively and most important for courses not using case study. Reading tasks showed just the opposite tendency, being rated most important in case study classes using lecture and the Socratic Method, and least important for courses not using case study. However, Conducting Research tasks were generally not rated highly important, while certain Reading tasks were rated highly important for all teaching methods.

Normative Thinking tasks were rated most highly important for case study courses including methods other that lecture and Socratic Method and somewhat less important for courses using lecture and Socratic Method exclusively and for those not using case study. However, Normative Thinking tasks were rated moderately important for all methods of teaching.

Tasks involved in Working as Part of a Group or Interpersonally were rated rather low in importance for courses using case study with lecture and the Socratic Method exclusively, and of somewhat higher importance for courses using methods other than lecture and the Socratic Method. This would suggest that at least some of these methods involved more group interaction than did lecture or the Socratic Method.

The general pattern of importance of certain types of tasks for success in law school courses holds, with a few exceptions, regardless of the teaching method employed in the course. Certain tasks in the categories of Analysis of Cases, Reasoning, Reading, Problem Solving, Constructing Arguments, Listening, and Writing are generally ranked more important regardless of the teaching method used in a course and other tasks are not rated as important regardless of the teaching method used.

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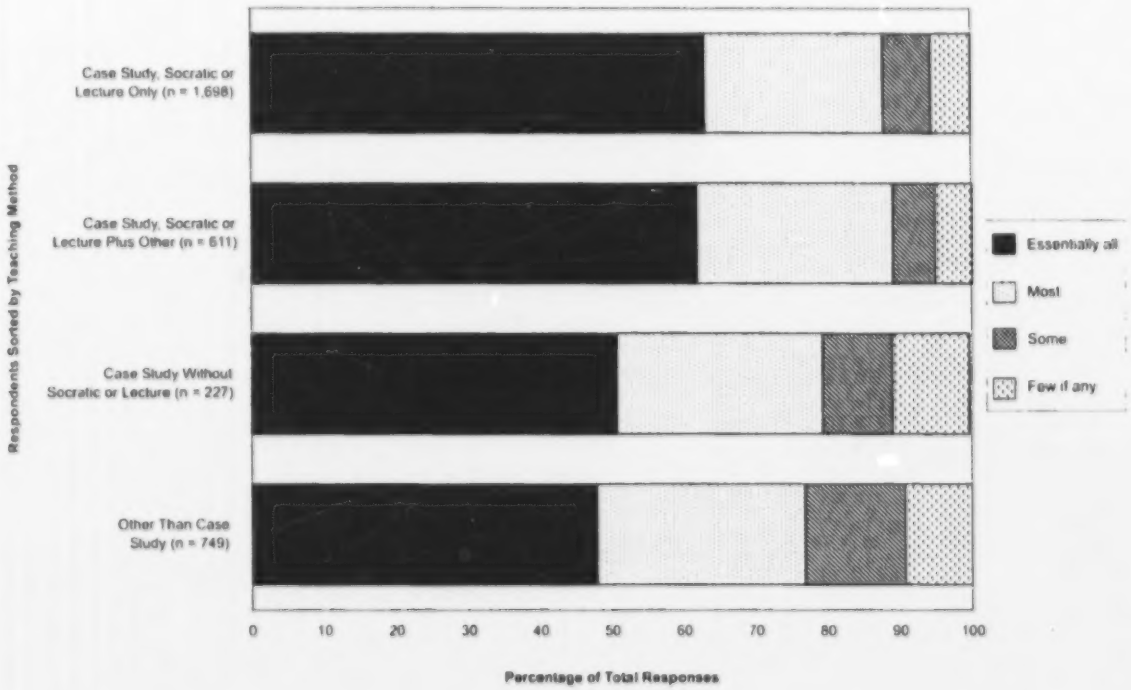
Question: Do the judgments of completeness of the list of tasks vary according to the teaching method used in a class?

Since courses using methods other than case study with lecture and the Socratic Method might involve a greater variety of tasks than those using a more limited range of methods, one could expect that the list of 57 tasks in the survey might be less likely to be regarded as including essentially all or most of the tasks essential for success in those courses involving methods other than lecture and the Socratic Method. And to a certain extent that is the case. In Figure 15, each bar represents one of the four teaching methods in the survey and the different shaded areas indicate the proportion of respondents answering that the list of 57 tasks includes essentially all, most, some, or few if any of the tasks essential to success in the course, respectively. The proportion of responses for all courses including lecture and the Socratic method, either exclusively or along with other methods, are nearly identical. A little over 60% of the respondents indicated that the list included essentially all the tasks and nearly 90% indicated that the course included essentially all or most. However, the proportion of responses for courses not including lecture and the Socratic method was not greatly different. Around 50% of the respondents for courses without lecture or the Socratic Method responded that the list included essentially all the tasks and nearly 80% responded essentially all or most. So, while the list of 57 tasks appear somewhat less exhaustive of the tasks essential for success in courses not involving lecture or the Socratic Method, it was still judged to contain most of the tasks involved in success in most courses regardless of the teaching method used.

FIGURE 15. *Proportion of responses for each teaching method to the question of how complete the list of tasks is (N = 3,285)*



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Conclusions

The basic question that the Skills Survey sets out to answer is, "what tasks are fundamental to success in law school courses." It does so by sampling the judgments of students and faculty about the importance of certain tasks in particular law school courses. While the sample of respondents is not exactly representative of the total population of law school students and faculty, it includes a very large number of respondents from a large number of schools and is quite similar to that population in most respects. Moreover, the responses strongly converge into a clear pattern that varies little among most subgroups in the population of respondents or between courses surveyed. The most significant differences in ratings of importance of tasks are between faculty and students and between first-year courses and upper-level courses. However, these differences do not significantly change the pattern of relative ratings of responses. Thus, we believe the survey provides a meaningful picture of what tasks are important for success in the law school courses surveyed.

The survey responses display a pattern with the categories of tasks in the survey falling into four tiers of importance determined by the mean task ratings and the percentage of respondents rating the tasks highly or moderately important. The first tier includes the category of tasks generally rated as most important to success in most law school courses—tasks involved in Analyzing Legal Cases and Problems. While the skills directly applicable to these tasks are taught in law school, there are certain fundamental skills of critical reading, analysis, and reasoning that underlie these tasks and that the current LSAT seeks to assess.

The categories of tasks in the second tier were also judged very important for success in most law school courses. These include Reasoning, Reading, Problem Solving, Constructing Arguments, Writing, Listening, and Managing Time tasks. The tasks in these groups generally were rated as important or highly important by all groups of respondents for nearly all courses. It is noteworthy that the tasks involved in the first four of the categories—Reasoning, Reading, Problem Solving, and Constructing Arguments—predominantly involve skills of critical reading and analysis, reasoning, problem solving, and argument analysis that the current LSAT seeks to assess. However, the skills for two other categories of important tasks in this tier are not tested by the current LSAT—Listening and Writing. The results of the survey suggest that the skills involved in these latter tasks are also fundamental to success in law school and that LSAC should investigate ways of testing them on the LSAT. Writing and Listening tasks are not only generally important in law school, they are also particularly important in some upper-level law school courses aimed at legal practice skills. The final category in this tier is tasks involved in Managing Time. These tasks involve skills in long-term time management, which there is reason to think cannot be assessed in a single-day test like the LSAT. The LSAT does, however, require short-term time management in answering questions under timed conditions.

The third tier includes tasks that are also important for success in law school, but not to the extent of those in the higher tiers or not so generally. The categories of tasks in this tier include Organizing and Synthesizing, Communicating Orally, and Normative Thinking. Communicating Orally tasks are ranked as generally less important than Writing tasks, even though they are important in classroom participation and in clinical and legal practice courses. The skills involved in these tasks are not currently assessed on the LSAT. Organizing and synthesizing tasks are regarded as more important by students than by faculty and are generally regarded as more important in traditional first-year courses in which students are required to discover the patterns of common law. The skills involved in these tasks are tested to a degree on the current LSAT in all three item types. Normative (ethical and public policy) Thinking tasks are rated as much more important by faculty than by students, but they generally are rated as rather important across the board in all courses and by all respondents. The present LSAT includes arguments and passages about ethical and public policy topics, although it does not include specific questions designed to measure normative thinking skills.

The survey results suggest that the tasks in the categories of Conducting Research, Quantitative Reasoning, and Working in Groups are not regarded as important in most law school courses. There are some courses, however, in which these tasks do play a more important role, such as Alternative Dispute Resolution, Appellate, and Tax. The skills involved in these categories of tasks are not currently assessed on the LSAT.

Finally, the four-tier pattern of importance basically holds for all respondents and for nearly all courses, except for some differences between faculty and students. Three categories of tasks were rated at a higher level by faculty than by students. These were Constructing Arguments, Reasoning, and Normative Thinking. The faculty ratings place Constructing Arguments and Reasoning in the first tier rather than the second, and Normative Thinking in the second tier, rather than the third. However, despite these differences, the overall pattern of relative importance of the tasks and the general levels of importance do not differ greatly between faculty and students. There are virtually no practical differences in the responses of male and female students, and the small differences in the responses of male and female faculty may be a product of the differences in the courses for which they responded. While there also were very small differences in the degree to which tasks were rated as important between respondents of different ethnicity, and between those whose primary language is other than English and those whose primary language is English, the pattern of

relative importance of the tasks and the general level of importance of the tasks was basically the same for all ethnic and language groups.

There were differences in the levels of importance of tasks and the patterns of relative importance between traditional first-year courses and upper-level courses. The data suggests that this may be due primarily to differences in the way in which these courses are taught. However, even taking these variations into account, most first- and second-tier tasks and some third-tier tasks were still rated as quite important for nearly all courses and teaching methods. This suggests that they are generally fundamental to success in law school courses.

Among respondents taken as a whole, the list of tasks on the survey was judged to contain essentially all or most of the tasks involved in success in the course by over 80% of the respondents. The list was judged as more exhaustive of tasks fundamental to success in traditional first-year courses. The responses to the survey and to the open-ended questions suggest that additional academic tasks may be involved in upper-level courses taught differently from traditional first-year classes. However, these additional tasks would appear to be course specific and not as important for success in law school in general as tasks rated highly important for all or most law school courses. The tasks rated as most important for traditional first-year courses were also predominantly rated as important for the upper-level courses surveyed.

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Appendix A

The Skills Analysis Survey Instrument

LSAC LAW SCHOOL COURSE TASK SURVEY

Law School: _____

Law School Course: _____

Instructions: The following survey is designed to collect information about the tasks required of students by the above-named law school course only. If you have not taken or taught the above-named course, please cross out the name and, if it is a first-year course, write in another first-year course you have taken or taught. If it is an upper-level course, write in the name of another similar upper-level course you have taken or taught. Please answer each question either by checking the appropriate box or by writing a brief response in the space given.

1. Please check the category that applies to you.

   ☐ Law school teacher of the above-named course.

   ☐ Law school student who has taken the above-named course.

2. Based on your experience with the above-named course, which one of the following best describes the teaching techniques or methods used in the course? (Please check only one response.)

   ☐ Case study using exclusively lecture, the Socratic Method, or a combination of the two.

   ☐ Case study using other techniques or methods (e.g., small group exercises) in addition to lecture or the Socratic Method.

   ☐ Case study not using lecture or the Socratic Method but instead using other techniques or methods (e.g., group exercises, open discussion).

   ☐ A teaching approach other than case study (e.g., historical survey, problem solving, focus on certain academic or legal skills, clinical practice).

3. Briefly describe any teaching techniques or methods used in the course in addition to or other than lectures or the Socratic Method. In addition, if case study was not the primary teaching method used in the course, please briefly describe the method used.

_____

_____

_____

4. Below is a list of tasks that might be involved in taking a law school course. Based on your experience with the above-named law school course, please rate each of the following tasks in terms of its importance to success in the course by checking the appropriate box to the right of the task. (Please check one and only one box per task. The order in which the tasks are presented is not intended to be an indication of their importance.)

Category: Managing Time TASK	HIGHLY IMPORTANT	MODERATELY IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT/ NOT APPLICABLE
1. Identifying academic goals and priorities and the tasks necessary to achieve those goals	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Allocating available time to tasks based on priorities	☐	☐	☐	☐
Category: Working as Part of a Group or Interpersonally TASK	HIGHLY IMPORTANT	MODERATELY IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT/ NOT APPLICABLE
3. Contributing to a group assignment, a discussion group for a class, or group exam preparation	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Engaging in negotiation, conflict resolution, or arbitration, including identifying issues in dispute, identifying common ground among disputing parties, and identifying solutions or resolutions on which parties can be brought to agree	☐	☐	☐	☐
Category: Constructing Arguments TASK	HIGHLY IMPORTANT	MODERATELY IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT/ NOT APPLICABLE
5. Identifying the strongest evidence or reasons for or against a position	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. Organizing evidence and reasons into a logically coherent argument for one's position	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. Effectively countering or rebutting the evidence or reasons against one's position	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. Interpreting or shading incomplete or inconclusive facts to support a conclusion	☐	☐	☐	☐
Category: Listening TASK	HIGHLY IMPORTANT	MODERATELY IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT/ NOT APPLICABLE
9. Identifying the key points in lectures and class discussions	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. Distinguishing precisely what a person has explicitly said and not said	☐	☐	☐	☐
11. Identifying what is implicit in what a person has said	☐	☐	☐	☐
12. Raising appropriate questions and arguments in response to what others have said	☐	☐	☐	☐

Category: Communicating Orally TASK	HIGHLY IMPORTANT	MODERATELY IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT/ NOT APPLICABLE
13. Answering in class basic questions about the facts or analysis of an assigned reading	☐	☐	☐	☐
14. Answering in class questions about unassigned hypothetical cases	☐	☐	☐	☐
15. Orally arguing persuasively for a position	☐	☐	☐	☐
16. Communicating orally with a client	☐	☐	☐	☐

Category: Organizing and Synthesizing TASK	HIGHLY IMPORTANT	MODERATELY IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT/ NOT APPLICABLE
17. Outlining a course for final exams, including identifying key cases and their facts, holdings, and principles	☐	☐	☐	☐
18. Identifying and assessing general theories that unify diverse areas of law	☐	☐	☐	☐
19. Formulating effective hypotheses to account for incomplete, inconclusive, or apparently incompatible information	☐	☐	☐	☐

Category: Writing TASK	HIGHLY IMPORTANT	MODERATELY IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT/ NOT APPLICABLE
20. Writing class notes	☐	☐	☐	☐
21. Writing briefs and summaries of cases and legal problems	☐	☐	☐	☐
22. Writing answers to exam questions	☐	☐	☐	☐
23. Drafting legal documents: e.g., case or appellate briefs, memoranda, complaints, responses to complaints, letters to clients or to other counsel, and legal instruments such as contracts or wills	☐	☐	☐	☐
24. Writing quickly and fluently under time pressure	☐	☐	☐	☐
25. Writing very concisely and with clarity	☐	☐	☐	☐
26. Listing or describing facts or information in writing	☐	☐	☐	☐
27. Arguing logically and persuasively in writing	☐	☐	☐	☐
28. Using proper grammar, punctuation, and spelling	☐	☐	☐	☐
29. Editing or rewriting	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Category: Reasoning TASK	HIGHLY IMPORTANT	MODERATELY IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT/ NOT APPLICABLE
30.	Deducing a conclusion (decision) from a legal rule, principle, or statute and a set of facts [deduction]	☐	☐	☐	☐
31.	Generalizing or synthesizing principles or rules from relevantly similar cases [induction]	☐	☐	☐	☐
32.	Identifying contradictions and fallacious or flawed reasoning	☐	☐	☐	☐
33.	Identifying and comparing patterns of reasoning in different arguments	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Category: Problem Solving TASK	HIGHLY IMPORTANT	MODERATELY IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT/ NOT APPLICABLE
34.	Identifying a legal problem and the legal issues involved in that problem	☐	☐	☐	☐
35.	Identifying alternatives and developing and implementing a plan of action based on identified goals and objectives	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Category: Analyzing Cases or Legal Problems TASK	HIGHLY IMPORTANT	MODERATELY IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT/ NOT APPLICABLE
36.	Identifying the key facts in a case or legal problem and the legal issues involved	☐	☐	☐	☐
37.	Identifying the basis for a legal decision (ratio decidendi)	☐	☐	☐	☐
38.	Interpreting statutes or opinions in relation to a case or legal problem	☐	☐	☐	☐
39.	Identifying the principle, rule of law, or statute operating in or applicable to a case or a legal problem	☐	☐	☐	☐
40.	Identifying and evaluating the arguments, claims, assumptions, or positions in a case or a legal problem	☐	☐	☐	☐
41.	Identifying the relevant similarities or differences of a case or a legal problem with other cases or legal problems	☐	☐	☐	☐
42.	Applying a case, rule, principle, or statute to a new or hypothetical set of facts	☐	☐	☐	☐

Category: Normative Thinking TASK	HIGHLY IMPORTANT	MODERATELY IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT/ NOT APPLICABLE
43. Identifying ethical and public policy issues and distinguishing them from non-ethical or non-policy issues or mere matters of fact	☐	☐	☐	☐
44. Engaging in reasoning involving public policy or moral or ethical principles	☐	☐	☐	☐
45. Comparing the weight of competing ethical principles or public policy considerations	☐	☐	☐	☐

Category: Conducting Research TASK	HIGHLY IMPORTANT	MODERATELY IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT/ NOT APPLICABLE
46. Using the law library and legal references to locate relevant sources of law	☐	☐	☐	☐
47. Using electronic databases such as LEXIS and WestLaw	☐	☐	☐	☐

Category: Reading TASK	HIGHLY IMPORTANT	MODERATELY IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT/ NOT APPLICABLE
48. Reading assigned materials in casebooks, textbooks, or reserved readings	☐	☐	☐	☐
49. Reading class notes, outlines, and sample exam questions to prepare for the final	☐	☐	☐	☐
50. Reading supplemental materials: e.g., legal treatises, legal encyclopedias, law reviews, horn books, etc.	☐	☐	☐	☐
51. Reading large amounts of material under time constraints	☐	☐	☐	☐
52. Reading critically and interactively, asking questions, taking notes, and rereading	☐	☐	☐	☐

Category: Quantitative Reasoning TASK	HIGHLY IMPORTANT	MODERATELY IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT/ NOT APPLICABLE
53. Making calculations	☐	☐	☐	☐
54. Comparing quantities	☐	☐	☐	☐
55. Interpreting and applying formulas	☐	☐	☐	☐
56. Interpreting statistics	☐	☐	☐	☐
57. Interpreting basic graphical representations	☐	☐	☐	☐

5. The tasks listed in question 4 (please check only one response.)

   ☐ include essentially all the tasks involved in success in the course.

   ☐ include most of the tasks involved in success in the course but do not include some other tasks involved in success in the course.

   ☐ include some of the tasks involved in success in the course but do not include many other tasks involved in success in the course.

   ☐ include few, if any, of the tasks involved in success in the course.

6. In the left-hand column of boxes write any tasks not listed in question 4 (one per box) that you believe, based on your experience with this course, are involved in success in this course. Please rate each of these additional tasks in terms of its importance to the course by checking the appropriate box to the right of the task written in. (Please check only one box per task.)

TASKS	HIGHLY IMPORTANT	MODERATELY IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT

7. Please add any further comments you may have regarding the tasks required for the above-named course. If necessary use the back of this page.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Demographic Information

(For statistical purposes only.)

D1. Are you: ☐ Male? ☐ Female?

D2. How would you describe yourself using the following terms? (Check only one box.)

- ☐ Aboriginal Indian/American Indian/Alaskan Native
- ☐ Asian/Asian American/Pacific Islander
- ☐ Black/African American (Not of Hispanic origin)
- ☐ Latino(a)/Chicano(a)/Puerto Rican/or other Hispanic
- ☐ White/Caucasian (not of Hispanic origin)
- ☐ Other (state)_____

D3. What year were you born? 19___

D4. What is your dominant language? ☐ English ☐ Other (state)_____

If you were a student during the 1996-97 academic year:

D5. Which of the following courses did you take during your first year of law school?

☐ Civil Procedure	☐ Torts
☐ Contracts	☐ Legal Research and Writing
☐ Property	☐ Constitutional Law
☐ Criminal Law	☐ Moot Court
☐ Introduction to Tax	☐ Introduction to International Law

D6. Please list below any other courses that you have taken during your first-year of law school:

D7. What was your approximate first-year law school GPA?

GPA _____ Scale _____

D8. What was your undergraduate major?_____

If you were a faculty member during the 1996-97 school year:

D9. Please list below any other courses that you have taught:

D10. From what school did you receive your law degree?

Appendix B

Abbreviations for Task Categories Used in the Figures

MT	Managing Time
GR	Working as Part of a Group or Interpersonally
AR	Constructing Arguments
LI	Listening
OR	Communicating Orally
OS	Organizing and Synthesizing
WR	Writing
RS	Reasoning
PS	Problem Solving
AC	Analyzing Cases or Legal Problems
NT	Normative Thinking
CR	Conducting Research
RD	Reading
QR	Quantitative Reasoning

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